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Gendered labour in the clothing and textile industry in Johannesburg: how do women employed in garment factories experience the gendered nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives?

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Gendered Labour in The Clothing and Textile Industry in Johannesburg

How do women employed in garment factories experience the gendered nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives?

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Labour and Economic Sociology)

Declaration

I declare this research report is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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Rozeena Das

Abstract

Women garment workers experience gendered labour both in paid garment labour and in unpaid social reproductive labour. This research explores how women employed in garment factories in Johannesburg experience the nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives. The report investigates the structure of the garment industry, the working conditions and gender relations in contemporary Johannesburg, the daily experience of women garment workers on the factory floor and in their homes, the impact of this on their emotional and physical well-being and lastly, how women make meaning of their and experiences of multiple roles of providers, migrants, garment workers and caregivers.

Adopting a qualitative approach, this research incorporates evidence from literature, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and observations. This study argues that women's experiences of both forms of paid and unpaid labour are not divided into separate spheres but are rather overlapping and interconnected. Thus, paid, and unpaid labour are experienced within a gendered nexus.

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1 . Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Traditional gender roles in society have cast men as the breadwinner, the family's main financial provider whereas women are cast as caregivers, usually, the housewife that partakes in unpaid social reproductive work such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for family members (Bear & Glick, 2017). However, today much has changed as most women's lives are dominated by paid employment yet to some degree they are still ascribed to roles in unpaid social reproductive labour in the home (Mezzadri & Majumder, 2020).

The increase of women in paid employment in the global south has been mostly associated with low-paid work, poor working conditions, unskilled labour, and precarious labour - in the case of South Africa this has been no different. In the South African context, women are 'pushed' into the labour market out of the financial and social need, rather than 'pulled' into the labour market out of demand for 'women's work' (Casale, 2004). Women's labour in South Africa is often precarious in nature which is characterised by labour markets that reproduce gender-based inequalities in income, work-related benefits, and social security (Malibo, 2018).

This research brings together both these forms of gendered labour - unpaid social reproductive labour and paid garment labour. This research intended to explore women's experiences in two forms of gendered labour, by exploring what the working conditions are of women employed in South African clothing factories and exploring women's home life and the unpaid gendered social reproduction that they partake in. The overall aim of this research was to determine how the interconnected burdens of wage labour and unpaid social reproductive labour affect the overall experiences of labour and the and physical and mental well-being of the women worker through addressing the main question of this research; *How do women employed in garment factories experience the nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives?*

The clothing industry served as the chosen site for this research as the industry is known to be dominated by women workers and characterized by gendered labour practices (Collins, 2009). According to Mosoetsa (2005), a high concentration of women has been documented in the footwear, clothing, and textile industry in South Africa. Hence these have been viewed as 'women industries'. These industries are synonymous with the exploitation of women, characterised by low wages and poor working conditions (Mosoetsa, 2005). In addition, the city of Johannesburg is known to have a fashion district, comprising various garment factories

(Rogerson, 2006; Joynt & Webster, 2011). Moreover, the city of Johannesburg attracts workers from all over South Africa and other African countries. Thus, women garment workers in the city of Johannesburg serve as a relevant site to explore how the nexus of gendered paid factory labour and the gendered nature of social reproductive work affect the experiences and well-being of women.

The analysis focuses on the role that paid and unpaid gendered labour plays in the lives of garment workers in Johannesburg through shaping their daily experiences, by bringing together the data collected from semi-structured in-depth interviews with four factory managers and nine garment workers and my observations. The findings are presented in three chapters. In chapter four, *Working conditions and gendered labour of garment factories in Johannesburg*, chapter five *Experiences of women employed in the garment industry with multiple forms of labour,* and chapter six *How women employed in garment factories in Johannesburg make meaning and understand their roles*.

The empirical findings of this research show that women employed in the garment industry undertake paid labour in the factories and unpaid labour in the home. They often experienced an interplay between both forms of labour as social reproductive responsibilities overflow into working hours and vice versa. Additionally, the findings indicated that labour served as a central aspect in the lives of the women as they structured their lives around paid labour and social reproductive tasks. Moreover, the findings showed that besides garment workers, the women took on multiple simultaneous roles such as providers, migrants, mothers and partners and they all had various ways in which they understood and made meaning of these roles.

The findings of this study demonstrate that paid labour and unpaid social reproductive labour are not neatly divided into separate spheres. Instead, they are interconnected and overlapping. Supporting the thesis that women's experiences of paid and unpaid labour are experienced within a gendered nexus.

1.2 Problem Statement

Since the rise of globalisation and the deregulation of labour in the 1980's there has been an increase in women's participation in the labour force, this phenomenon is referred to as the feminization of labour (Standing, 1989; Akorsu, 2016). According to Akorsu (2016), neoliberal economic globalisation with its connected free trade is the single most cause that has led to the increase of the feminisation of labour. Globalisation and free trade have sought out cheap labour which has resulted in the transfer of production to economies with cheaper labour, mostly in the global South. Additionally, it has led to increased fragmented production flexibility and labour flexibility. Women have traditionally been marginalised into domestic, informal, and casual labour which seems to offer them the opportunity to hold employment and maintain their household responsibilities (Akorsu, 2016). In addition, women's characteristics have become more desirable for certain sectors and have transformed women into a pool of labour (Akorsu, 2016). Woman are seen as timid and willing to work for less wages, they are seen as to have limited education and thus unaware of their labour rights and they are seen to have innate abilities and a malleable nature which are desirable for capitalists, especially in garment, textile, and technology industries (Akorsu, 2016). Therefore, feminization of labour is driven by a complex combination of demographic, cultural, and economic elements (Standing, 1989; Akorsu, 2016).

Since women's increased participation in the labour market there has been much focus in the literature on women juggling/maintaining a work-life balance. As women that participate in the labour force face a double burden of labour of paid work and unpaid domestic work (Fleetwood, 2007).

Regarding the garment industry and woman workers there is plenty of literature that focuses on gendered garment labour and the appalling working conditions that women workers face globally, in Sri Lankan export-processing zones (Hancock *et al*, 2015), in Bangladeshi ready-made garment factories (Akhter *et al*, 2019), maquiladoras in Mexico (Domínguez *et al*, 2010), and the garment industry in Lesotho (Dyer, 2001). However, in the South African context much of the literature focuses on garment labour in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and parts of the Free State (Natrass & Seekings, 2012). Regarding the city of Johannesburg, much of the literature provides an historical perspective on garment labour as the focus is on white garment labour from the 1920s to the 50s (Touyz, 1979; Witz, 1988; Hart, *et al*, 1989; Brink, 1984).

However, in terms of contemporary literature on garment labour and workers in Johannesburg there is a gap in the literature as there is little to no focus no on the experiences of women garment workers specifically in the context of Johannesburg, which is what this study aims to provide.

1.3 Research Questions

This research report intends to answer the following questions that are intrinsically embedded in the research:

- What are the working conditions in garment factories situated in Johannesburg?
- What is the gender composition in garment factories in Johannesburg?
- What are the experiences of women employed in the garment industry in paid labour and unpaid social reproductive labour?
- What is the interplay of paid labour and unpaid labour in the lives of women employed in the garment industry?
- What are the experiences of migrant women employed in the garment industry?
- How do women employed in the garment industries make meaning, understand, and perceive their roles?
- How is the well-being of women employed in the garment industry affected by their roles in labour?

2 . *Literature Review*

This chapter provides a review of the literature concerning the main question of this research; *How do women employed in garment factories experience the nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives?* The review focuses on three main themes on the topic which emerge throughout the literature on the topic and the findings of this research. These themes are the impact of globalisation on the South African garment and textile industry and the gendered labour that characterises garment work, the double-burden of labour women face and the multiple roles they engage in and lastly, gender and migrant labour in relation to garment work. In order to gauge the question, the review of literature aims to provide an overview of the structure of the garment sector in Johannesburg, highlight the dual roles and significance of women in paid and unpaid labour and detail the experiences of migrant women.

2.1 Johannesburg's garment industry and gendered labour

Globalisation

It is of importance to begin this discussion by looking at the production system that shapes global capitalism as it is inherently linked to labour in the global south. Gereffi & Korzeniewicz (1994) note trade liberalisation led to nations participating in global manufacturing chains by specialising in different branches of manufacturing at various stages within a specific industry. This has led to the emergence of a global manufacturing system and global commodity chain in which the production of commodities is outsourced amongst several developing as well as industrialised countries. This is particularly the situation for the textile and garment sector. According to Gereffi & Korzeniewicz (1994), manufactures and retailers mostly located in the global north (such as big apparel brands e.g., Nike, GAP, etc.) have established an international trade network that stretches amongst a vast geographical distance around the globe. This type of commodity chain is referred to as a buyer-driven commodity chain as industries such as large apparel retailers set up a dispersed production network in a variety of exporting countries mostly located in the global south. A buyer-driven commodity chain involves buyer companies providing the specification of designs or tasks located often in the global north (or located within the chain at the controlling node of power) to various manufactures or factories that manufacture, package and ship all around the world from the global south. This process is primarily carried out through the management of trade networks (raw material and component

suppliers, manufacturers, factories, traders, overseas buyers, and retailers) to ensure that products come together as an integrated whole from various locations around the globe. The rise of global competition has reshaped trade and production and thus changed industries such as the clothing and textile industry. A buyer-driven commodity chain within the clothing and textile industry is characterised by multiple small labour-intensive factories that offer low-wage labour (such as sweatshops) and flexible organising that attract foreign investment and increase competitiveness in the specific industry (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994). Appelbaum & Lichtenstein (2006) note that globalisation is a result of policy choices and has shifted power from the manufacturer to retail distribution and from an economy centred on high-wage men to one where the flexible low-wage labour of women is crucial.

According to Vlok (2006), before democratisation in 1994 the clothing and textile industry in South Africa remained protected from international trade and competition, focusing on the domestic market and import substitution. After apartheid, South Africa joined The World Trade Organization (WTO) and opened its markets to international trade. In the 1990s the value of the Rand depreciated steadily leading to undervaluation which allowed the industry to increase exports and remain competitive against imports. However, in the 2000s the value of the Rand appreciated and much of the export performance disappeared. Moreover, the increasing liberalisation over trade and the reduction of tariff barriers saw a surge in imports primarily from China, as China has lower production costs and imports from China are cheaper. This resulted in a crisis in the South African clothing and textile industry characterised by a major loss of employment (Vlok, 2006) as many clothing and textile factories relocated to rural areas or to countries such as Botswana and Lesotho to take advantage of cheaper labour (Joynt & Webster, 2016).

According to Joynt & Webster (2016) the fashion district of inner-city of Johannesburg, Gauteng was once a prosperous hub for South Africa's clothing and textile industry on the Witwatersrand in 1920s and 30s (see also Dos Santos, 2009) which was previously characterised by large full-package manufactures (FPMs), which handle the whole manufacturing process of clothing by designing, sourcing materials and producing the entire garment start to finish (Joynt & Webster, 2016). However, as a result of trade liberalisation and international competition, today the inner city of Johannesburg has only a few FMPs as the industry is decentralised and instead characterised by hundreds of smaller informal and unregulated cuts, make and trim factories (CMTs), which only assemble garments based off

given designs and materials. Many of these CMT's operate in run-down hijacked buildings that have been abandoned by their owners in the inner city's fashion district (Joynt & Webster, 2016) whereas the big design houses and independent fashion designers that put Johannesburg on the fashion map operate in the city's more commercially developed suburbs located in the North, away from the city centre (Rogerson, 2006). CMT's in inner-city Johannesburg are characterised by African migrant labourers with advanced skills in stitching and embroidery specialising in African prints, bridal gowns, curtains, custom items, etc. (Joynt & Webster, 2016).

Joynt &Webster (2016) note, "The majority of the enterprises in the Fashion District are linked to small, primarily domestic, value chains, and there are few production links from larger factories in the district to the SMEs in surrounding areas. For the most part, Fashion District factories are neither export-orientated nor linked to international brand names." (p.51). There are four main types of clothing enterprises identified in the Johannesburg 'fashion district'. (1) FMP's: are connected to the value chain, contracted to large brands and retailers. They are formal and regulated, workers are unionised, are mostly local, work regular hours and receive bargaining council wages (Joynt & Webster, 2016). (2) Connected CMT's: are registered, linked to formal production chains, connected to independent designers, or contracted to larger FMPs to produce clothing for niche designer markets and in rare cases international markets. The workers are both local and migrants, workers are not unionised, but they work regular hours and receive bargaining council wages. (3) Piecework CMT: lacks a design house, relies on irregular contracts, could be registered and they supply local designers or small retailers. The workers are local and migrants; there is no worker unionisation; they work irregular hours, and wages are paid by piece and employment is precarious (Joynt & Webster, 2016). Lastly (4) survivalist CMT's and micro-enterprises: are not linked to design houses nor tenders, they supply small retail stores, street traders, and individual customers, they are unregistered and unregulated, and the workers are mostly migrants; there is no worker unionisation; workers are paid per piece produced and working hours are irregular and employment is precarious. This type of CMT is mostly male migrant-owned and employs male migrants and is typically based in small rooms in tall buildings in the inner city which are often cramped and stuffy (Joynt & Webster, 2016). Thus, the international competition resulted in the restructuring of the clothing industry in inner-city Johannesburg which in turn created a precarious class of workers (Von Holdt & Webster, 2008). The rise of new precarious workers in the industry has weakened the collective organised labour due to the fragmentation of the labour market from the

decentralisation of production and the increase in casual part-time work (Joynt & Webster, 2016).

Beyond clothing factories in the inner city of Johannesburg, Nattrass & Seekings (2012) note that the South African clothing industry is the most laborious sector of South Africa's manufacturing industry. The industry consists of various divisions with different product specialisations, "these include a high waged and less labour-intensive sector producing good-quality garments for high-income markets and a low waged, more labour-intensive sector" (Nattrass & Seekings, 2012, p.1), mostly located in KZN, Free State, and Western Cape. That produce basic clothing for middle to low-income consumers (Nattrass & Seekings, 2012).

Now that it is clear how the garment industry in contemporary Johannesburg is structured, in the following section I move to discuss the type of labour that characterises garment work, with a specific focus on the gender relations of labour in the South African garment industry.

Gendered Garment Labour

Typically, global garment work is associated with women's labour. In the late 1960s a new type of employment in production/manufacturing clothing and textile factories became available for many poor women in the global south (Elson & Pearson,1981; Chapkins & Enloe,1983), due to multinational corporations relocating labour-intensive production lines from developed countries to cheaper production sites in the global south in the1960s (Caraway, 2007). The labour required for production and manufacturing is typically viewed as 'low-skill' and is inherently linked to gender as work in the clothing and textile industry such as sewing is perceived as innately 'women's work'. Furthermore, Elson & Pearson (1981) note, it is widely viewed that female labour is cheaper and more productive than male labour. These gendered stereotypes and divisions of labour are based on perceived 'natural' personality traits, capacities, and needs. Women's 'nimble fingers' are believed to be better suited and more productive for work with clothing and textiles, women are thought to be more docile, willing to do more work through discipline and more suited to repetitive work than men (Elson & Pearson, 1981). In terms of lower wages, it is believed that women do not need as much money as men as they are not socially perceived as the sole provider for their families, and it is also due to women being perceived as having secondary status in the labour market due to their capacity to bear children which in most cases take women out of the labour market (Elson & Pearson, 1981). Elson and Pearson (1981) argue that though there are differences between men and women as factory workers, these differences are far from natural. Moreover, Caraway

(2007) notes that exporters competing in global markets are sensitive to labour costs with gendered consequences. Exporters hire women based on their subordinate position to men which means they could be paid lower wages thus export-orientation and patriarchy combine to construct women as an ideal workforce (Caraway, 2007).

In South Africa, the garment industry has been historically dominated by women workers (Baker, 1962; Brink, 1986; Berger, 1992). In more recent research, a study by Tager (2016) on women in the clothing and textile industry in South Africa (unidentified site) based on interviews with SACTWU shop stewards in 2014, identified that gender was a major theme that arose as many of wage and factory conditions were directly related to gender with male managers and female workers. Many of the shop stewards were male who represented female-dominated factories. In terms of the workforce, the women workers operated sewing machines whereas the males were in higher positions as stock assistants or clerks. The working conditions for women involved lack of benefits (maternity leave), discrimination for pregnancy, unsafe and unsanitary working conditions, pressures to meet quotas and low wages. Moreover, women workers in South African clothing factories faced discrimination on an intersectional basis of class, gender, and race. Shop stewards noted that women workers were placed in an inferior position based on their position in the labour market as factory workers, on the basis of their gender "as females facing male supervisors, makes it difficult for them to assert their demands" (Tager, 2016, p. 40). Similarly, Karrim (2011), found that the majority of female employees that made up the clothing and textile industry work under awful working conditions. This emerged from raids on 12 Chinese-owned factories in Newcastle KwaZulu-Natal, by the police, departments of labour and home affairs, the National Bargaining Council and the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU). They found that garment and textile workers at these factories were being paid less than R489, which is less than the weekly minimum wage stipulated by the council. The workers were also subjected to a poor working environment and treatment. The workers at these foreign owned factories never received toilet paper and any injured factory workers were left outside the building, so the factory owners could avoid being held accountable for an injury. Moreover, the garment workers were strip searched, "We have to open our bras and lower our underwear in front of all the other workers. When we have our periods, they make us take off our sanitary pads. They don't care that there are men around or that they're insulting my culture" (Karrim, 2011, Mail & Guardian). Overall, it was found that the female majority garment worker's human and labour rights were being violated. On the contrary, Joynt & Webster (2016) found that Johannesburg's clothing industry

was dominated by male garment workers. According to Joynt & Webster (2016), many informal CMT's in the inner-city fashion district are owned by majority migrant male's and the employees were predominantly male migrants from other African countries.

This section provided an overview of the production systems that shape global capitalism, the impact of globalisation on the South African garment industry and the structure of the contemporary garment industry in the inner city of Johannesburg. In addition, this section provided a gender profile of garment labour. Given that women garment workers are the focus of this research, in the next section I examine women's daily roles and experiences both on the factory floor and in their home.

2.2 Double burden of labour

Women are often ascribed to a double burden of labour - of paid labour and unpaid social reproductive labour (Sengupta & Sachdeva, 2017). Even in cases involving families wherein both partners have full-time paid employment women are often left with the responsibility and spend more time on domestic labour than men (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Hochschild & Machung (2012) note that the social reproductive labour that women take on in the home after a day of paid labour in the workplace can be referred to as a 'second shift' of labour, moreover they note that the gendered nature of social reproductive labour is due to the internalisation of traditional gender roles by both partners in a family hence men and women both believe that it is the women's job to take on the majority of domestic labour in the home. This division of labour is true for South Africa as well (Mosoetsa, 2011; Fakier & Cock, 2009; Budlender, 2010).

Unpaid social reproductive work in the home has always been socially constructed as gendered 'women's work' and is still mostly performed by women (Federici, 2012). Housework has been imposed on women and "transformed into a natural attribute of our female physique and personality, an internal need, an aspiration, supposedly coming from the depths of our female character" (Federici, 2012, p. 16) thus framing social reproductive work as something other than work. Unpaid social reproductive work in the home can take the form of (a) biological reproduction and the sexual, emotional, and affective conditions to maintain motherhood/family and intimate relationships; (b) reproduction of the labour force involving subsistence, education, and training; and, (c) unpaid production in the home of goods, services,

the provisioning of care and the social provisioning of needs in the community (e.g., voluntary work) (Rai *et al*., 2014; Bakker, 2007).

Unpaid social reproductive work in the home is directly linked to capitalism and paid employment as human labour reproduces society. More specifically, social reproduction such as 'familial' and 'communitarian' labour serves to sustain and reproduce the workers and their labour power as a commodity for capitalism (Chattopadhyay,1999). An aspect of the social reproduction of labour power occurs through the home/family as it forms a site where labour is replenished through the availability of food, clothing, shelter, and rest (Bhattacharya, 2017). Though the home might be a space where workers reproduce their labour power, the gendered nature of social reproduction means that women workers that take on social reproduction also maintain the labour power of other members of the family as they are fed, clothed, and rested (Heitlinger, 1979). The understanding of capitalism is incomplete if we do not consider how social reproduction reproduces capitalism – "the daily and generational reproduction that occurs in households, hospitals, schools, etc. that sustains the drive for accumulation" ((Ferguson, 2015) as cited in (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 2)).

In the South African context, Benya (2015), highlights the role of women's unpaid social reproductive labour in the context of the Marikana mine strikes of 2012 which brings together the world of work and home. Social reproductive labour is not merely just 'housework'. Instead, it is work done for the benefit of capitalists and its reproduction as worker's ability to perform their best to maximise surplus value, this depends on the unpaid work of women (Brown *et al*, 2013 as cited in Benya, 2015). Benya (2015) notes, in the mining town of Marikana, North West, the women are mostly positioned as the partners to the mineworkers. These women take care and look after the migrant mine workers on a daily basis more than their wives who remain in the mine worker's place of origin. The women of Marikana service the men, fetch water, prepare meals, wash dirty laundry, and reproduce their labour. They have children, raise children, and take care of the mineworkers when they are ill. As mistresses these women remain in precarious positions often dependent on the wages of the men. This means that they are "at the beck and call of their male partners, their lives dictated by men and the mines" (Benya, 2015, p.547). These women do most of the work that reproduces the daily conditions of mineworkers. The men's low wages are also subsidised by women's unpaid labour and without the unpaid labour of these women the men would not be productive workers. In the wake of Marikana mine strikes and the massacre, Benya (2015) states the lives

of the women of Marikana are greatly affected by the mines and mine working shifts as their daily conversations revolve around the events of the mine. Their partners wages determine whether they can purchase basic necessities and mine shifts determine their activities for the day. During the miners' strike the women were highly involved. They would support each other when their partners did not return home from the mines, and they provided food for mineworkers hiding from police harassment. Moreover, women also played a key role in mobilising and sustaining the mineworker strike and at the Commission of Inquiry on behalf of mineworkers who could not attend due to injury. Therefore, Benya (2015) argues that women of Marikana are central to the accumulation to capital but also central to resisting it through their roles in mine wage strikes: "Rather, we need to see women's reproductive activities as critical in simultaneously holding together the mines and shaping their politics of production" (p.556). Similarly, Fakir & Cock (2009) argue that African working-class women are the shock absorbers of the crisis of social reproduction in South Africa.

Based on literature, unpaid social reproductive labour is often viewed as something other than work. Folbre & Nelson (2000) state that the term 'homemaking' is often used to describe women's unpaid work in the home due to the nature of caring activities mixed with household production and is often presented as a 'labour of love'. However, this division lumps together the difference between physical care labour and emotional labour. This blurs the physical labour involved in unpaid social reproduction and represents the feelings of fatigue and irritation as that involved in emotional labour (Hochschild, 2002; Fakir & Cock, 2009).

Similarly, the literature on garment labour often frames garment factory labour predominantly done by women as 'unskilled' labour. Morris & Barnes (2014) notes that the labour-intensive nature of the apparel sector allows the sector to absorb large numbers of 'unskilled' labour. According to English (2013), gendered notions of labour and wages resulted in men holding textile jobs that involve strength, skills, and specialised training in roles such as managers, shop floor supervisors and machine fixers. Whereas women hold 'unskilled positions' such as machinists and spoolers, these positions have lower wages and lesser responsibility (English, 2013). English (2013) states that introduction of new technology in the apparel and textile industry broke down the production of garments into smaller and smaller tasks, sometimes into hundreds of discrete operations. This led to deskilling as it removed the skill required to make a garment from fabric to a ready-to-wear product (English, 2013). Garment factory work is mostly framed as 'unskilled' labour globally (English, 2013). However, literature centred

around research on the experiences of women garment workers often frame garment work as skilled and garment workers as possessing expertise in sewing. Based on ethnographic fieldwork amongst garment workers in Trinidad, Prentice (2012) found that learning to sew provides Trinidadian women with the 'technical skill' to create livelihood strategies through paid wage labour as garment factory workers or petty production for a private client base. Prentice (2012) notes that garment making requires two skills for cutting and stitching. Cutting involves mapping out patterns and executing it onto material. This involves "visualizing, measuring, designing, drawing, plotting, and cutting fabric with scissors" (p.403). Stitching involves sewing pieces of fabric together either by hand or sewing machine to create a ready-to-wear garment. Prentice (2012) states that for garment workers, describing themselves as dressmakers or into sewing is more than just an occupational identity. Instead, it is a phrase that invokes their cherished expertise. The factory, sewing school and the home are all sites to acquire and attain sewing expertise (Prentice, 2012). Similarly, Lynch (1999) states that there are technical skills that are involved in garment work that workers need to master. For instance, machinists have a vast list of skills to master such as sewing seams in various patterns, sewing on different types of electric industrial sewing machines, threading various types of fabric. Moreover, besides sewing skills, garment workers need to master efficacy on the production line, machinists need to master the skill of minimizing any injury such as back pain and other bodily pain (Lynch, 1999). Rauch (1996) addresses the social construction of skill amongst female garment workers in Vancouver. Rauch (1996) states that the labour of garment workers is socially constructed as being of low-value and low-skill both within the factory and outside of the factory. However, based on ethnographic observation on the shopfloor and interviews with workers, management, and unions, it was found that despite the efforts of managerial staff to create the perceptions of 'unskilled' work and workers, garment workers are knowledgeable and competent on the job (Rauch, 1996).

Now that women's double burden of labour and their importance and skill set in these spheres have been discussed. The subsequent section will focus on the multiple roles and responsibilities women take on in their nexus of paid and unpaid labour.

Multiple Roles

The double-burden of labour that women experience often positions them in multiple roles. According to Sumra & Schillaci (2015), women that balance paid labour outside of their home along with their domestic responsibilities engage simultaneously in multiple roles. According to Sumra & Schillaci (2015), "the engagement in multiple roles has been regarded as a key characteristic of female identity" (p.3). Multiple roles are often associated with the construct of the female 'superwoman' identity. The superwoman identity refers to a woman who adopts multiple roles such as mother, partner, worker, caregiver, sister, etc. (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). The literature around the 'superwoman' identity often posits the identity construct in relation to the double-burden of fulfilling both career and domestic obligations (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015, Newell, 1993; Xhaho, 2021). In the South African context, the roles of women are amplified due to the prevalence of woman-headed households because of the high rates of father absence in South Africa (Chauke & Khunou, 2014). According to McLanahan & Teitler (1998), single mothers are forced to play two roles- that of father and mother. Hence single mothers may experience higher stress levels (McLanahan & Teitler, 1998).

Contrary to the literature that dismisses the gendered labour experiences of female garment workers, both Wright (2013) and Gunawardana (2016) furthermore address the effect of this double burden of labour by assessing the well-being of female garment workers.

Wright (2013) unpacks the myth of the 'disposable third-world women' in global capitalism and argues that it is the dominant discourse of neoliberal economic development. According to Wright (2013), the myth of the 'disposable woman' is centred around a young woman from the global south, who through time employed at the factory, losses her value until she is 'worthless'. This occurs a process of 'wasting away' within factories that employ women, as it is perceived that shortly after her employment, she loses the physical and mental capacities (due to exploitative working conditions) required to do her job thus she is only worth less than the cost of her dismissal and replacement. This myth is based on the explanation that the process of wasting away is a natural outcome and thus nothing can be done to avoid the result. Wright (2013) states that this myth is used by global capitalism and owners/managers of factories in the third world to justify exploitative labour conditions but to also view third-world women as disposable devalued labour and to gender woman workers in the third world to the point that they are reduced to mere characteristics valuable to capitalism such as a pool of surplus population and other physical characteristics that are of value (nimble fingers). From

this, capitalism extracts the value till these women result in waste to be disposed of (Wright, 2006). Similarly, Gunawardana (2016) argues that both dual roles for women, to carry out social reproduction in the home and wage labour in clothing factories bring gendered harm and deplete the women worker until she is no more, as factory work does not provide adequate resources to replenish for labour reproduction, such as enough time to rest and money to buy healthy food and shelter. This often results in depletion in the form of physical injuries which hinder women from carrying out factory labour (Gunawardana, 2016).

This section tackles the notions that dismiss gendered social reproductive work as something other than work and gendered garment labour as unskilled labour. By highlighting the significance of unpaid social reproductive labour done by women and by emphasising the skills required for garment work. Moreover, this section stresses the double burden of labour that women face along the multiple roles they take on and impact of this on their wellbeing. In the following section I discuss garment labour and gendered migration in the context of Johannesburg.

2.3 Migration and labour

Migration and Garment Work

Given that the findings of this research indicate that there are migrants prevalent in the labour supply to garment factories in the city of Johannesburg, it is important to discuss the relation of migrant labour to garment work. Migration due to work is one of the primary reasons for international mobility globally (ACMS, 2022). In the global context, internal migration for garment work has been a common occurrence in countries with a thriving garment industry. The literature shows that rural to urban migration is common among women in search of garment factory jobs in Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, India, and Lesotho amongst many other countries (Patwary, 2022; Withers & Piper, 2018; Gim, 2019; Botea, *et al*, 2018). However, in the context of Johannesburg, rural to urban migration for garment work was more common before South Africa joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and opened up its markets to international trade resulting in increased imports. Brink (1986) and Hart & Parnell (2012) note that the growth of the garment industry in Johannesburg during 1915-1939 attracted women in search of work. Hence Afrikaner women from the impoverished countryside in the rural areas migrated to Johannesburg (Brink, 1986; Hart & Parnell, 2012). However, unlike the majority of findings that indicate rural to urban migration for work in garment factories, the contemporary labour force at garment factories in Johannesburg mostly comprises locals and external African immigrants from Malawi, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Botswana and Mozambique as aforementioned by Joynt &Webster (2016).

In the next section I examine migration to Johannesburg relative to gender.

Gendered experiences of migration

The city of Johannesburg, South Africa is a place where many South Africans and migrants come in search for better lives and improved livelihoods (Isike & Isike, 2012; Walker & Oliveira, 2022). Grant & Thompson (2015) note that the city of Johannesburg is a characteristically a migrant city. After the end of apartheid, the inner-city of Johannesburg has been witnessed an influx of African immigrants along with informal trade networks and international migration circuits (Grant & Thompson, 2015). Walker & Oliveira (2022) note that for some the city represents a place of hope and refuge, yet the city is only home to only few of the residents. For some people the city of Johannesburg represents an entanglement of

hope, desperation, poverty, possibility, and disappointment. According to Walker & Oliveira (2022), these paradoxes are more acute to women migrants who are both poor and Black.

According to Kihato (2007), early literature on migration in Johannesburg mostly framed migration as "consequence of regional economic imbalances and employment" (p.90) and centred male migrants and the demand for 'productive male labour'. However, Kihato (2007) notes that this discounted women as "analytically and economically unimportant" (p.90). Moreover, Kihato (2007) states that literature that discusses women as migrant labourers often frames women as passive subjects in the migration process as they often only portray women migrants as an accessory, accompanying male migrants, or they discuss woman as receiving remittances from migrant men. However, Kihato (2007) notes that with the increase of female migration, population movements, the growing interest in gender studies, etc. has resulted in centring the migration experiences of women in migration literature. Yet this has often solely focused on the negative such as women's vulnerability and coercion into exploitative labour. Kihato (2007) states that this reproduces "women's perceived passivity and lack of agency in the migration process" (p.91). Moreover, this perspective often frames women as victims that need to be 'saved' and makes the lives of migrant women invisible (Kihato, 2007).

In her own study of women migrants from neighbouring African countries in the inner-city of Johannesburg and surrounding areas, Kihato (2007) found that women who have migrated to Johannesburg indicated that their migration and their lives were difficult as they often face an intersection of vulnerabilities such as economic marginalisation, physical danger, patriarchal oppression, loneliness and disruption of familial support structures yet the narratives of these women migrants rejected victim identities. Rather the women used terms like 'struggle' as a positive qualifier for survival. In addition, Kihato (2007) found that women were not only secondary participants in migration as they made their own decisions to migrate. Moreover, despite the fact that women migrants were less likely to have access to formal/regular paid jobs than men, it was found that they have similar economic profiles to men and were more likely to be entrepreneurial (Kihato, 2007).

Similarly, unlike other literature that excludes, misrepresents, or underrepresents these groups, Walker & Oliveira (2020) explore the lived experience and needs of women migrants from the African continent living in Johannesburg through art-based methodologies. They position the women migrants as 'experts' of their own experiences and allow the participants to control, explore, and portray their lived experience on the intersections of being both a woman and a

migrant in Johannesburg (Walker & Oliveira, 2020). Through narrative stories and the creation of a decorative quilt by the participants, Walker & Oliveira (2020) found that migrant women had complex lives. They found that all the participants travelled to South Africa as either asylum seekers, fleeing war or instabilities in their countries of origin from countries such as Rwanda, DRC, and Zimbabwe. In addition, the women's everyday experiences were shaped by an intersection of challenges such as issues with access to free healthcare, employment and schooling for their children that were tangled with gender-based violence and xenophobia (Walker & Oliveira, 2020). Lastly, Walker & Oliveira (2020) found that migrant women in Johannesburg faced issues with their identities and issues of belonging.

Overall, the review of the literature above provided an overview of the main themes and concepts necessary for understanding how women employed in garment factories experience the nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives.

3 Methodology

3.1 Methodology

This chapter details the methods that were employed to meet the objectives of this research by determining *How do women employed in garment factories experience the nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives?* The chapter entails detailed descriptions of the research processes such as methodologies, data collection instruments, description of research site and sampling techniques. Moreover, this chapter includes some insights on experiences conducting the research, highlighting the successes and challenges and how all these contribute towards the analysis of information and the compiled report.

3.2 Research Site

The everyday practices of the garment workers took shape within garment factories in and around the inner city of Johannesburg such as Doornfontein, Troyeville, Jeppe, Selby and the Johannesburg CBD and within their homes located in either surrounding areas or areas situated on the outskirts of the city of Johannesburg, such as Soweto, Evaton, Orange Farm, Natalspruit, Berea, Jeppestown and Bertrams. All research was conducted at garment factories. There was a total of five factories involved in this study that varied in manufacturing and production types as detailed below:

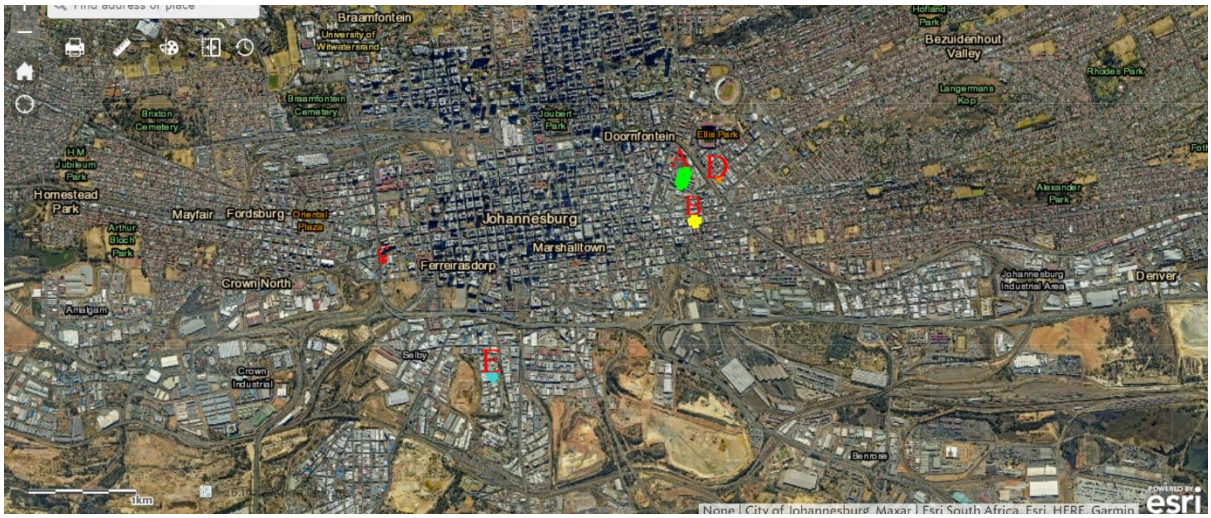

Figure 1 Site in Context: Garment Factories in Johannesburg (source: GCRO,2022).

Factory A: Factory A was situated in Doornfontein within a nine-story high-rise building. The high-rise building was characterised by many industrial, office or retail spaces in the form of various sized spaces or rooms, yet garment manufacturing spaces were the most commonly occurring such as Factory A. Factory A was housed in a small-medium sized room, that functioned as one manufacturing space as there was no separate areas for dedicated tasks such as the reception area, packing area, etc. Factory A was characterised as an informal CMT factory as they focused on the production process as the fabric and trims were supplied by the buyer. Factory A mainly produced hoodies, sweatshirts, and matric jackets. They also offered printing and embroidery to their clients however, this was outsourced by Factory A as they did not have their own machines for those services. Factory A was owned and managed by two black South African women.

Factory B: Factory B was located in Maboneng, Jeppestown, within a high-rise building. This factory was housed in a medium-large space and the layout included separate spaces for the reception area, office, and factory. Factory B was a formal CMT and FPM. They mainly produced and manufactured corporate uniforms. Factory B was owned by a South African Indian man.

Factory C: Factory C was situated in the Johannesburg CBD within a high-rise building. As in the case of Factory A, Factory C was housed in a small to medium sized room, that functioned as one manufacturing space as there were no separate areas for dedicated tasks such as the reception area, packing area, etc. Factory C was characterised as a small informal CMT. They mainly produced corporate clothing, industrial safety wear and school uniforms. Factory C was owned and managed by a black South African man.

Factory D: Factory D was located in Troyeville, within a low-rise three-story building. This factory was housed on the entire third floor, which was a medium to large space. The layout of this site included a small office area in the front, the machinists' setup in the back and the packing and checking section on the side. Factory D was characterised as an FPM and they mainly manufactured cleaners clothing, jackets, golf shirts and PPE. Factory D was owned by a South African Indian man and the main supervisor was a South African coloured woman.

Factory E: Factory E was located in Selby. This site comprised two free-standing buildings. The smaller building was a small space that functioned as a reception and office area and the larger building housed the factory. Factory E was characterised as an FMP. They mainly

manufactured medical wear, culinary wear, and sportswear. Factory E was owned by a white South African man.

The face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted either in the reception area, outside or inside the factories. During the interview masks were worn by researcher and participant and social distancing was maintained. The interview process lasted approximately 20 minutes each with the answer's audio recorded with the given consent of the participant.

3.3 Data Collection and Sampling

This study aimed to determine how women employed in garment factories experience the nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives. The methodology underpinning the data collection relied on a qualitative approach, this included in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews and some observation as the aim of this research was to collect detailed information on the experiences of women in clothing factories. Roberts *et al.*, (2003) argues that qualitative research is well suited to describe, explain and understand attitudes and human behaviours of a small number of participants in their natural setting as opposed to what may be considered the more artificial settings of quantitative surveys. The characteristics of qualitative research such the insider perspectives, the context sensitivity and the thick lengthy descriptions gained from in-depth semi structured interviews were key in determining how the nexus of gendered paid labour and unpaid social reproductive labour shape the everyday experience of women employed in garment factories. The primary method used to gather data was in-depth semi structured qualitative interviews as aforementioned. This interview process was similar to ordinary conversation as I elicited questions on topics as they arose naturally in conversation such as "Tell me what a typical working day looks like for you; from the time you wake up to the time you go to bed?". Bless *et al*., (2013) argues that asking participants to comment on broadly concepts allows the participants the freedom to expand and reflect on their own experiences as they wish. In addition to in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation methods were utilised as a method of collecting data through watching, listening and documenting behaviour and events in a natural setting.

The sample in this study consisted of thirteen participants: four garment factory managers and nine garment factory workers. Out of the nine garment factory workers, only two of the

participants were male. The participants were recruited through calling garment manufacturing companies/factories located in Johannesburg and requesting permission to visit the factory and hold face-to-face interviews with the factory managers/supervisors to gather information about the factories in addition to requesting permission to hold face-to-face interviews with female garment workers to gather information about their daily lives and labour experiences. The interview process with the factory supervisors/owners were done in a similar manner as the interviews with the garment workers. The factory supervisors/owners were asked questions around the workings of factories in terms of what type of factory it was, who they supplied to, how they hired staff, etc. Later in the study, it was discovered that the experiences of male garment workers would be of value to the study and thus two interviews with males were conducted as well. Besides purposive sampling, garment factory workers and managers were asked by the researcher to recommend other garment workers or factories as a means of snowball sampling, but no participants were gained through this channel.

Below is a brief introduction to each garment worker in this study, pseudonyms are used to protect the participants identity:

Stella: Stella was a 23-year-old, black woman, originally from Zimbabwe. Stella was employed at Factory A (informal CMT) located in Doornfontein. She worked as a general garment worker and her daily tasks in the factory involved doing the buying for materials or samples and handling the orders for the couriers to collect. In addition, she was also a trainee machinist but did not take on any sewing tasks. Stella was a single-mother of a two-year-old daughter. She lived in Bertrams with her daughter, sister and mother, less than 10 minutes away from the factory she was employed at.

Patience: Patience was a 42-year-old, black woman. She was employed at Factory C (informal CMT) located in the Johannesburg CBD. Patience worked as a machinist. She was a single-mother of two children, aged 13 and 17 years-old. Patience lived with her children in Natalspruit, which was on estimate 45 minutes away from the factory she was employed at.

Sarah: Sarah was a 46 -year-old, black woman. She was employed at Factory C (informal CMT) located in the Johannesburg CBD. Sarah worked as a machinist. She was a mother of four children: 8-year-old twins, a 12-year-old, and a 23-year-old. Moreover, Sarah was a wife, her husband worked as a taxi-driver. Sarah lived in Soweto with her children and husband, which was an estimated 45 minutes away from the factory she was employed at.

Sharon: Sharon was a 26-year-old, black woman. She was employed at Factory D (formal FPM) located in Troyeville. Sharon worked as a general garment worker. Her job involved packaging finished garments, receiving the textiles, and doing odd jobs on the factory floor. Sharon was a single-mother of a seven-year-old daughter. She lived in Jeppestown with her daughter, which was less than 10 minutes away from the factory where she was employed.

Rose: Rose was a 27-year-old, black woman. She was employed at Factory D (formal FPM) located in Troyeville. Rose was employed as a general garment worker, checker and cleaner. Rose was a mother of a 6-year-old daughter. She resided with her daughter and partner in Berea, located 15 minutes away from the factory she was employed at.

Lauren: Lauren was a 57-year-old, black woman. She was employed at Factory E (formal FPM) located in Selby, Johannesburg. Lauren was employed as a production director, but her other roles included supervisor and machinist at times. Lauren was a single mother of three children, aged 37, 23 and 21-years-old. She resided in Evaton with her youngest child, which was typically a 45-minute commute to the factory.

Lydia: Lydia was a 48-year-old, black woman, originally from Lesotho. She was employed at Factory E (FMP) as a machinist. Lydia was a single mother of three children, aged 10, 16 and 25 years old. She resided in Orange Farm with her two younger children. Orange Farm was on estimate a 30 - 40-minute commute to the factory where Lydia was employed.

Samson: Samson was a 44-year-old black man originally from Malawi. He was employed at Factory D as a machinist. Samson was a husband and a father to three children, aged 8, 10 and 14 years old. He resided in Bertrams with his wife and three children. Bertrams was only 10 minutes away from the factory.

Dan: Dan was a 29-year-old black man originally from Malawi. He was employed at Factory D as a machinist. Dan was a husband and a father to one child, aged 5 years old. He resided in Bertrams with his wife as his child remained in his country of origin.

Brief interviews were also conducted with four factory managers. Tyler was a 37-year-old South African Indian male. He was the owner and director of Factory B, and he oversaw the running of the business and. Tshepiso was a black South African male, he was the co-owner and manager of Factory C. Yolandey, was a South African Coloured woman. She was a supervisor at Factory D, and she oversaw the factory workers and the production process.

Lastly, there was David, a South African white male. He owned Factory E and mostly worked in the office and oversaw the overall running of the company.

Listed below is an overview of all interviews conducted in this study:

Interview no.	**Date of Interview**	**Participant Name**	**Job Description**	**Factory Type**	**Location**
1	08/08/2021	Stella	General worker/machinist in training	Factory A: Informal CMT	New Doornfontein
2	08/08/2021	Tyler	Factory manager/owner	Factory B: formal FPM & CMT	New Doornfontein
3	02/12/2021	Tshepiso	Factory manager/owner	Factory C: Informal CMT	Johannesburg CBD
4	02/12/2021	Patience	Machinist	Factory C: Informal CMT	Johannesburg CBD
5	02/12/2021	Sarah	Machinist	Factory C: Informal CMT	Johannesburg CBD
6	02/12/2021	Yolandey	Factory manager	Factory D: Formal FPM	Troyeville
7	02/12/2021	Sharon	General garment worker/ receiver	Factory D: Formal FPM	Troyeville
8	02/12/2021	Rose	General garment worker and garment checker	Factory D: Formal FPM	Troyeville
9	10/12/2021	David	Manager	Factory E: Formal FPM	Selby

10	10/12/2021	Lauren	Production director/ floor supervisor/ machinist	Factory E: Formal FPM	Selby
11	10/12/2021	Lydia	Machinist	Factory E: Formal FPM	Selby
12	18/03/2022	Samson	Machinist	Factory D: Formal FPM	Troyeville
13	18/03/2022	Dan	Machinist	Factory D: Formal FPM	Troyeville

Table 1

3.4 Limitations

The study was constrained by several factors; these include gaining access, time constraints, language barriers and sample size. The study was constrained by a limited timeframe and because gaining access to garment factories and participants took a lengthy amount of time to locate companies with factories in Johannesburg that were willing to allow research to be conducted. Thus, the sample size remained relatively small. During fieldwork itself time constraints had also been a limitation as most garment factories required the interview process to be done as quickly as possible or no longer than 15 minutes overall to not take away from production time at the factory, with two of the visited factories stating that research could only be conducted during the lunchtime of the garment workers. This limited the amount of time spent interviewing participants and eliciting more in-depth questions. In addition to this, language barriers presented one of the biggest stumbling blocks, during the interview process most participants would not understand the initial phrasing of the questions which required the question to be rephrased to simpler terms which, to a degree, impacted the initial meaning of the question. On the other hand, the language barrier resulted in some participants answering questions very briefly, even in the case where they were asked to elaborate which did not allow me to get a descriptive account of their lives. One of the interviews conducted was informally translated by a admin staff between myself and a Sesotho speaking garment worker, which meant that a lot may have been lost in translation; thus, providing room for misunderstandings and my own potential misrepresentations of particular narratives, and again due to time

constraints, I was not able to go back to each woman and fill in gaps in narratives but I was able to call factories and speak to managers.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations in this study included the guarantee of confidentiality of the participants, issues of informed consent and Covid-19 regulations. Confidentiality was ensured by the use of pseudonyms and identifying information was removed in the research report, moreover, the audio recordings were stored on a password protected device, were only accessible to the researcher for transcription and were destroyed at the completion of the research. The participants were required to give their informed consent both verbally and through signing formal consent forms to participate in the study and their informed consent was required to have the interview audio recorded. Participants were informed that they could withdraw their participation at any point during the interview if they wished to do so. This study was low-risk and ethical permission was obtained via The School of Social Science's ethics committee. The study was in line with the COVID-19 national regulations, guidelines, and protocols in the collection of data as masks were worn and social distancing was always maintained of least one and a half metres from each other, all interviews were either conducted in well-ventilated areas or outside.

3.4 *Analysis*

The method of analysis used in this study was a thematic analysis. The audio recordings of the in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews with garment workers and factory supervisors were transcribed and then coded thematically to reveal recurring themes and patterns. A thematic analysis was used to understand the data through identifying themes in order to understand the experiences of a specific group of people (Kawulich & Holland, 2012), in this case the experiences of female garment factory workers in the factory and in the home. The thematic analysis involved familiarisation of the data through transcribing, analysing, and

reading the text, coding all data, and then identifying and reviewing seven core categories this process involved grouping interrelated codes under much broader themes:

Codes	Categories
● Gender composition in the factory ● Personality traits in the workplace ● "Women work" ● The role of men in the participants lives	Gender roles
● Tired ● Stress ● Time spent on social reproduction. ● sleeping hours	well-being
● Working hours ● Wages ● Working environment conditions ● Workplace conduct ● Job security ● Travel time	Working Conditions
● No partner/husband ● Lives alone with children	Single headed household
● Supporting extended family members	Multiple dependants
● Migration and remittance practices ● Stress ● Roles in labour	Experiences and understandings

• Roles as providers	
• Cooking • Cleaning • Childcare • Care for others • Dependant on social reproductive labour from others	Social Reproduction/ Unpaid Labour

Each of these themes were examined to gain understanding, insight and perceptions of participant's everyday lived experience, their roles in paid and unpaid labour and the gendered challenges they face. The identified themes are in line with concepts discussed under the literature review in chapter 3, mainly the working conditions at the garment factory and in the home, the gendered roles in at work and in the home, the interplay between paid labour and unpaid labour and the perceptions, understanding and experiences of women and their role in labour. Moreover, the core identified themes are in line with the set-out research questions. The identified themes were grouped under a set of analytical categories.

In the chapters to follow I discuss the three main themes that emerged from the analysis. These themes are *Working conditions and gendered labour of garment factories in Johannesburg*, the analysis maps out the structure of each of the visited factories, determines the working conditions based on the experiences of women employed in these factories and lastly determines the gendered labour in contemporary garment factories located in Johannesburg, based on the data collected on the working conditions, the gender composition in the workplace and the perceived gendered characteristics. The fifth chapter: *Experiences of women employed in the garment industry with multiple forms of labour,* focuses on the lived experience of women garment workers in the interplay between paid and unpaid labour. Lastly, chapter six; *How women employed in garment factories in Johannesburg make meaning and understand their roles,* explores how the women make meaning, understand, and perceive their roles and

identities as garment factory workers, migrant labourers, and their roles and identities in their social reproductive spheres such as providers, caregivers, mothers, etc.

4 . Working conditions and gendered labour of garment factories in Johannesburg

4.1 Contemporary garment factories located in Johannesburg.

The garment factories where the participants in this study were employed were characterised by different manufacturing purposes and working conditions. Most of the garment workers in this study were employed at garment factories that were linked to the formal sector of the garment manufacturing industry except for three participants which were employed at smaller informal factories. The formal factories were characterised predominantly by full-package manufacturers (FPMs). The formal FPMs handled the whole manufacturing process of clothing by designing, sourcing, or manufacturing materials, and producing the entire garment from start to finish. The two informal factories in this study were smaller, linked to the informal sector, which were unregulated and characterised by a combination of FPMs and cut, make and trim factories (CMTs). The smaller informal factories handled the whole manufacturing process and took orders that only involved the assembling of garments based on given designs and materials. The participants in this study were employed at factories that manufactured everyday garments such as t-shirts, pants, dresses, uniforms, etc.., except for one of the formal factories that specifically manufactured culinary wear, medical scrubs, and gym wear.

The formal FPMs were larger factories located in and around the city of Johannesburg. Factory E was situated in a large stand-alone building that was attached to another smaller building that housed the reception area and office. The other two formal factories, factories B and D, were housed on a single floor in low-rise buildings that took up the entire floor of the building. They both had a separate large factory space and office space. On the other hand, the two smaller informal factories (factories A and C) were located on the outskirts of the Johannesburg CBD and in New Doornfontein. These smaller factories were both housed within small rooms in high-rise buildings. There were no demarcated signs to indicate the name of the factories and there was no separate office nor reception space. The high-rise buildings where these factories were located also housed several other small informal garment factories.

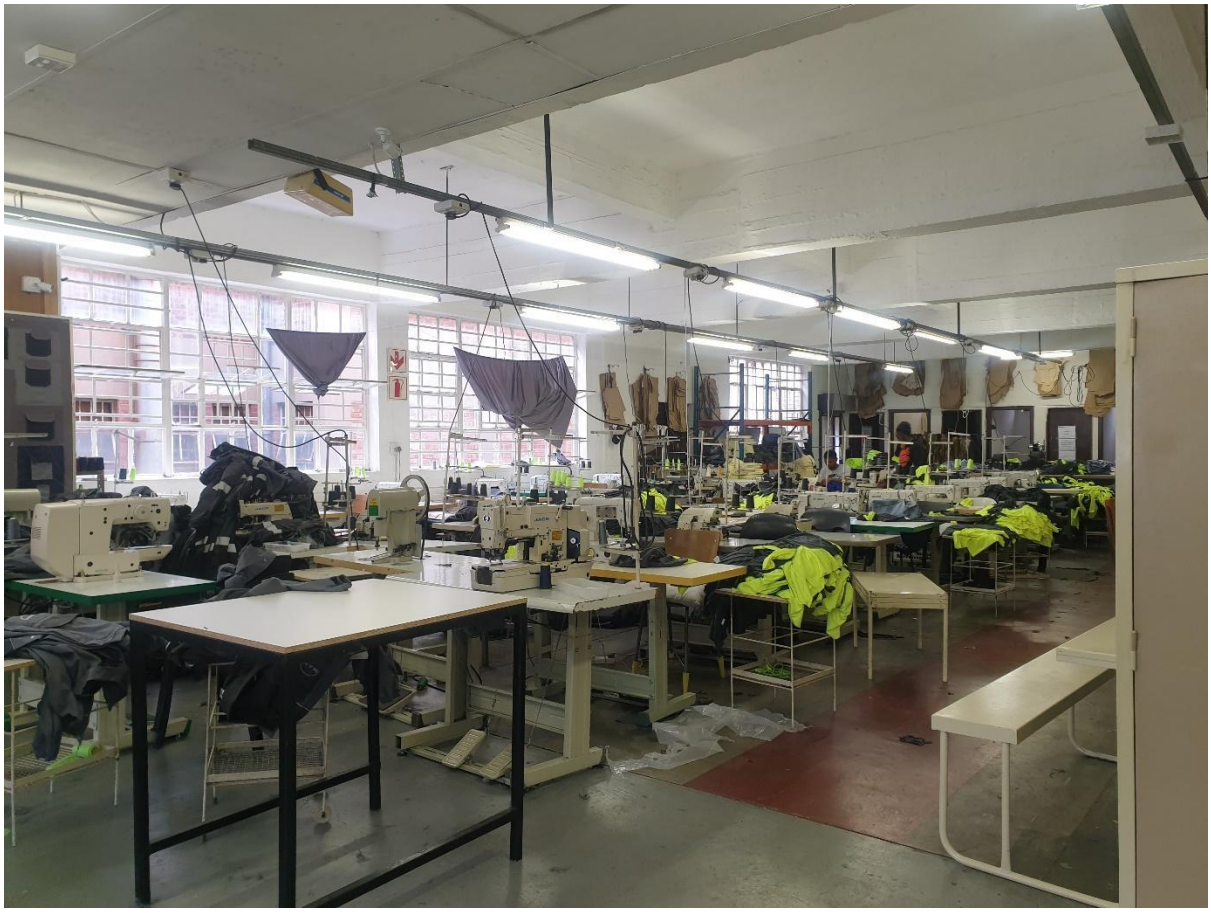

Figure 2 Garment Factory (D): Factory Floor

All the garment workers in this study were employed at factories that were primarily linked to domestic value chains with a few productions linked to neighbouring African countries such as Botswana and Namibia but none were linked to international brand names nor specifically, export oriented: “We mostly supply local but we have dealt with orders from Botswana and Namibia” (Interview 1), “We do supply locally but there are times where orders have come in from other African countries” (Interview 8). Similarly, in their study on garment workers in the inner city of Johannesburg, Joynt & Webster (2016) have noted that the former Johannesburg fashion district and garment industry in the Johannesburg city was decentralised. There were fewer FMPs and hundreds of smaller informal CMTs that operated from high-rise buildings. In addition, Joynt & Webster (2016) also found that garment factories in Johannesburg, specifically the informal CMTs, predominantly supplied to local retailers. However, unlike in the work of Joynt & Webster (2016), I found that the majority of garment factory workers were South African nationals yet two of the garment workers were migrants

employed at informal CMTs. Joynt & Webster (2016) have noted that migrants were more likely to be employed at this type of garment factory.

The nature of the work processes involved in manufacturing garments for the participants, like most workplaces, were characterised by workplace hierarchies. The workplace hierarchies in garment factories usually consisted of (from top to bottom) factory managers, production directors, floor supervisors, machinists, receivers, checkers, packers, and cleaners. The factory manager oversaw the entire running of the garment factory. The production director planned and oversaw that production targets were met as aforementioned. The factory floor supervisors supervised all activities that occurred on the factory floor which included the machinists, checkers, and packers. The receivers received the deliveries of textiles that were cut according to a pattern that the machinists needed to sew and assemble to manufacture various items of clothing using high speed electrical sewing machines. The checkers inspected the completed garments to ensure that they were up to standard. The checkers removed loose threads and finished off the loose ends on the garments which were manually sewn by hand. The garments were then ironed in some cases using industrial irons and steamers. Lastly, the packers packaged the garments and prepared them to be sent to the client by typically neatly packaging the garments in plastic bags and packing them in boxes. Besides the factory managers the garment workers in this study consisted of a production director, machinists, checkers, receivers, and packers.

Working Conditions

Based on the accounts from the interviews with garment workers employed at various garment factories, the working conditions in the garment factories were investigated in terms of working hours, physical and environmental conditions, job security, unionisation, safety, and wages.

In terms of the working hours, all the garment workers reported that they were required to work a total of eight hours a day. This included one hour for lunch. Most of the workers worked a total of six hours from the morning till lunchtime, they worked from 7:30am -1:30pm, took an hour lunch and then worked two hours in the afternoon, from 2:30pm- 4:30pm. The working hours were strictly controlled in the factories. At Factory D, I observed that the garment workers were only allowed to stop working and take their lunch when a loud bell rang in the factory at 1:00pm. When this occurred all the machinists and other garment workers stopped what they were working on and went on their lunchtime break. Samson, an employee at factory D, stated: “ya... this bell is for lunch time and then for home time” (Interview 11).

However, regardless of the eight-hour working day, some of the participants from both the formal and informal factories reported working more than eight hours a day. Three women in the study reported that it was a common occurrence to work more than eight hours a day, by either coming in earlier or leaving later in order to meet the production targets that were set for that day or week. This was done to ensure that all tasks were completed so delivery could take place on time. As one participant stated "I start working at 9 and then only leave at 5 or later depending on what I'm doing. Sometimes there are a lot of orders, so I have to wait for couriers and stuff" (Interview 1). Three of the garment workers in this study were only required to work five days a week whereas seven of garment workers were required to work on Saturdays as well. According to five of the participants, working on Saturdays was company policy; they worked every Saturday. Yet, two of the participants employed at an informal factory (Factory C), worked on some Saturdays only when there were production targets to be met. This was due to Factory C relying on contracts or tenders, "I don't work on weekends, but sometimes when the work is too much then we come" (Interview 5). All participants that worked on Saturdays reported only working for five hours but this varied for the two workers employed at the informal factory as production targets varied every week.

According to most women in the study the production targets were set by production directors. The production directors planned, coordinated, and implemented the production requirements based on the working hours, efficiency of the staff, number of factory workers and the number of pieces of clothing needed to be produced by a certain date. Once the production target for the day or week had been set the production director together with the supervisor monitored the clothing production processes and ensured that the staff met the set production targets through motivating them and through putting pressure on the garment factory workers. The garment factory workers were informed by their floor supervisors either on the day or a day before that they had to work later than their set times when they had not met their production targets for the week or as in the case of other factories the workers would be informed by their supervisors at the end of the working week that they had to work on the weekends to meet the production target. According to the garment workers employed at formal factories, they were often asked to work over official time. According to a production director employed at a formal factory "By law it's supposed to be 8 hours, which is half past 7 to half past 4 and then Friday we start half past 7 to 2. But on my side, I'll be here from after 6 and starting to work till half past 4 or 5 everyday" (Interview 9).

The worker unionisation, employment benefits, and job security status varied across the garment workers, but there were no notable differences between those employed at formal and informal factories based on interviews with garment factory workers and managers at the garment factories where the interviews took place. Yolandey, a manager at a formal sector factory (D), noted that the garment workers at the factory were not unionised, received no employee benefits but they were full-time permanent workers that on average earned weekly wages which varied according to skill from around R850 – R1300. Similarly, David, a manager at a formal Factory (E) stated that the workers were not unionised, received no employee benefits but were employed full time (Interview 9). Likewise, Tshepiso, a manager at an informal Factory (C), expressed that the garment workers were not unionised and had no job security as they were part-time workers hired on 3-month contracts as the factory and production was on a smaller scale that relied on the contract work which was not always available (Interview 3). The workers at Tshepiso's factory earned on average R4000 a month and received no benefits besides a bonus in December, which only applied to employees if they were still employed at the factory during that time (Interview 3). Similarly, Stella, a worker at another informal factory (A) stated that some of the workers were part-time employees, were not unionised, and earned on average R5000 per month with no benefits at all (Interview 1). The global garment industry is typically associated with little to no employee benefits and suppressing worker unionisation. In Sri-Lankan EPZ and Mexican Maquiladoras, garment workers are denied access to worker unions as the absence of trade unions attracts more foreign investment (Milberg & Amengual, 2008; Shaw, 2007).

In terms of safety at the workplace, all garment workers in the study expressed that they had never been injured on the job "No, I have never been hurt while working here" (Interview 8). Except for one respondent, Sarah, a machinist. Sarah said that she had previously been injured on the job when a needle had pierced through her hand while she was making a tunic using the industrial sewing machine (Interview 5). She explained that her needle injury was an extremely painful experience that led her to a lot of blood loss (Interview 5). She stated that when the injury occurred on the factory floor her other co-workers attempted to help her get the needle out of her hand and stop the bleeding, but she had to eventually leave work immediately and go to the clinic. Sarah stated that she went to the clinic with her supervisor. Once she was at the clinic, she got stitches which the company paid for, and she was given time off from work so her injury could heal (Interview 5). During the interview Sarah had shown me the scar that was left from her injury.

Some participants in this study made use of personal protective clothing and equipment such as aprons, overcoats, masks, gloves, and thimbles for hand sewing. However, the garment workers that did not have any personal protective clothing and equipment were at risk for dust, dye and other hazardous chemicals contacting their skin during cutting, sewing, and handling of textile waste. This predisposes garment workers to health risks and has been associated with an increased prevalence of eczema (Zungu & Gabe, 2011). Additionally, the lack of protective gloves and finger thimbles exposes workers to pricks and cuts as in the case of Sarah's injury. Given that sewing and the use of needles and pins was a major activity the lack of thimbles and gloves to protect the hand and fingers also exposes garment workers to the risk of bloodborne infections such as HIV and Hepatitis B due to the needles drawing blood and the sharing of needles between workers (Ind & Jefferies, 1999; Zungu & Gabe, 2011).

In terms of the general workplace conditions and physical and environmental conditions I observed that natural ventilation was inadequate; the factory environment was cramped and stuffy. This was due to only a few small sized windows and one door entryway that was kept closed in both the small scale one room garment factories (A and C). These factors prevented airflow in these small, congested spaces. Additionally, there were no fans nor air conditioning to create a circulation of air and to mitigate heat. These conditions at these informal CMTs appeared to be much like the many other informal garment factories that I observed in both high-rise buildings.



Figure 3 High-rise building: Garment Factory (A) (Source: Google Maps 2022).

Ventilation has been a key healthy and safety concern in the garment industry worldwide. Inadequate Ventilation at garment factories was found to be an occupational health hazard in Asia (Padmini & Venmathi, 2012; Gupta *et al*, 2015), Latin America (Pérez Floriano & Pacheco, 2018) and Africa (Zungu & Gabe, 2011; Asare *et al*, 2019). The quality and safety of the working environment impacts both the productivity and health of the workers (Hossain *et al*, 2014). Poor working environments such as the inadequately ventilated and cramped factories in this study have proven to have had harmful effects on garment workers resulting in illness and life-threatening incidences. According to Hossain *et al* (2014) the lack of air flow and humidity due to the worker's body temperature and the constant use of equipment such as sewing machines and ironing machines etc., traps heat. The trapped heat and the lack of air changes result in incidences of illness as headaches, respiratory problems, vomiting, fatigue, and fainting (Hossain *et al*, 2014). Additionally, the lack of adequate ventilation, cramped and overcrowded working environments that characterise garment factories is related to the occurrence of Tuberculosis among the workers worldwide. A study on the factors related with Tuberculosis amongst textile workers in Maseru, Lesotho indicated that there were incidences of TB in small-scale textile industries due to the workers coming into contact with dust and damp air due to the lack of adequate ventilation and overcrowding in the factories (Senekal-Ndebele, 2020). According to Senekal-Ndebele (2020), the high rates of the airborne disease, TB in the textile industries of Lesotho was found to be caused by the lack of adequate ventilation and overcrowding. The prevalence of TB amongst garment workers in developing countries was also found by others, see also (Al-Khal et al, 2005).

Additionally, the lack of ventilation and the cramped and overcrowded working environment posed an added risk during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The participants that were employed at factories characterised by working environments that were poorly ventilated and cramped were at risk for contracting Covid-19 as in the case of Tuberculosis, Covid-19 is also an airborne disease. Moreover, the majority of the staff at both these factories were not wearing the mandatory face masks nor complying with social distancing measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. The three garment workers from these smaller informal factories expressed that though they were concerned about the dangers of their working environment in terms of the high possibility of contracting Covid-19, they were ultimately accustomed to their situation, "ya… you know I was scared before but now we are used to it" (Interview 5), "There's nothing we can do, the space here is small and we have to work" (Interview 6). However, a majority of

the participants were not concerned about contracting Covid-19 “No... I’m feeling safe here… No Covid…it's fine” (Interview 12).

Besides health risks, poor ventilation also possesses safety concerns in the garment industry. According to Hasan *et al,* (2017), in garment factories where fires incidents had occurred, heat and smoke were trapped inside these factories due to inadequate ventilation resulting in major deadly incidents in the garment industry. A fire occurred at a Bangladeshi garment factory (Tazreen Fashions) – which killed at least 1,134 people and injured more than 2,500 (Ashwin *et al*., 2020).

In terms of workplace treatment, some of the garment workers reported that they received fair treatment from their superiors, however, in some cases, fair treatment was not consistent. All the garment workers in the study initially expressed that they were treated well by their supervisors/managers, however, some garment workers noted that when there was a lot of work to be done or when production targets needed to be met, the supervisors would push them to meet the targets by increasing their workloads, pressuring them to work at a faster pace and them yelling at them. I observed garment workers being yelled at by a factory supervisor during my visit to a large formal factory to conduct interviews. In this instance the floor supervisor of the factory was observed loudly shouting at employees which was a norm according to Rose and Patience, two participants from this factory: “Ya… but you know when we are busy and need to meet production the supervisors push us and shout at us to meet the production target so ya.” (Interview 7, Personal communication). Lauren also shed some light on the treatment of staff by supervisors in garment factories:

> The supervisors push us very hard to get the job done. Even me myself, I push the other workers and assist them to get it done so we can deliver on time. But also, as a supervisor myself I also make time to be friendly and crack jokes with the staff to lighten the mood but when it’s time for production it’s time for production, but some supervisors put too much pressure, gossip about the staff which makes it difficult to ask for production (Interview 9).

Lauren, an experienced production director explained to me that in her role as a production director, she struck a balance between being strict with the garment factory workers when it came to meeting production targets and being friendly at other times to lighten the mood with the workers and to create a balanced relationship with them. Moreover, Lauren stated that in

her experience some supervisors would be too strict, constantly putting pressure on the workers and gossiping about the workers which in turn led the workers to resent the supervisors. Thus, when the supervisors would ask the workers for the production, they would be met with workers who purposely worked slower or made it difficult to get work done.

Yelling at staff is a form of workplace misconduct. Moreover, according to Harlos *et al* (2000), the mistreatment of staff in the workplace that occurs between employees and authority figures such as yelling is a form of interactional injustice. Forms of interactional injustices are used to intimidate, instil fear, and induce control of employees which invoke negative emotional responses in employees (Harlos *et al*, 2000). Additionally, pressuring staff to meet production targets could be seen a form of workplace misconduct and a health and safety risk as injuries such as needle punctures on fingers are more likely to occur due to production pressure as "they attributed the prevalence of accidents to the pace of production, long hours of work and pressures to meet quotas" (Hale & Wills, 2011, p.1939).

4.2 Gendered Labour of contemporary garment factories located in Johannesburg.

The gender composition of garment workers varied across different factories. According to the interviews with the managers of the factories and the garment workers in this study it was established that there were more men than women employed as garment factory workers. Garment factory workers include machinists, packers, checkers, receivers, and cleaners.

Gender Composition of garment workers and Gender Discourses on Labour

Out of the five garment factories only two of the factories were characterised by a gender composition that consisted of more women employed as garment workers than men. Whereas the other three factories had a majority of men that were employed as garment workers. Majority of the literature on global garment work indicates that garment factory work has been associated as 'women's work' due to the gendered discourses of labour that infer gender-biased beliefs of labour for men and women (Hossain *et al*, 2013). These gender-biased beliefs include assumptions that men and women possess gendered characteristics suited for different types of labour. The gendered characteristics for women, perceived women to possess smaller hands, nimble fingers and to be more patient, docile, and sincere, making women ideal garment

workers as these characteristics are supposedly better suited for the intricate task of sewing (Elson & Pearson, 1981). Additionally, the literature of garment work in the global south indicates that a great share of the labour force is predominantly constituted by women; the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh (Hossain *et al*, 2013), export-processing zones in Sri-Lanka (Hancock *et al*, 2015), maquiladoras in Mexico (Domínguez *et al*, 2010), the garment industry in Lesotho (Dyer, 2001), etc. Thus, the findings of more men employed at garment factories in Johannesburg differs from the norm.

When asked why this was the case, Stella, an informal factory worker expressed that while women still worked as garment factory workers, it was men that predominantly made up the available labour supply of machinists thus more men than women were hired for these jobs: "The men are just the labour that's available…they have the skills to sew. while they are women it is not like before where only women do the sewing." (Interview 1). Moreover, she stated that this was especially the case for the smaller informal CMT factories in Johannesburg as migrant men from African countries such as Zimbabwe and Malawi tended to be employed in these factories more than women (Interview 1). In a different account Lauren stated, "Joburg side the males also, they do like to sew and work as a machinist" (Interview 9). Additionally, the two male participants in this study stated that they did not view garment work through a gendered labour perspective as they believed that garment work was both for men and women. Samson, who had learnt to sew in Malawi, stated that he believed garment work was not just for women: "No this work is not just for women. we men are doing it here" (Interview 12). Similarly, Dan shared the same opinion. Dan, a machinist, explained to me that he had learned how to sew in Malawi at the young age of 10 as he was interested in his grandfather's job as a home-based machinist. Dan's grandfather initially started teaching him how to hand stitch with a simple needle and thread and then gradually teaching him how to sew with an electrical sewing machine. Once Dan had learned the skills to be a machinist, he would assist his grandfather in his home-based small business making garments and tailoring clothing. Dan stated that though he was employed at a garment factory with only one machinist who was a woman, he believed that anyone could be machinists:

> Women, also they can sew, as long as they can concentrate on the work, and what they are doing, you can be a machinist. So as long as they are concentrating, anyone can be a machinist. Because there are many things that you have to do to be a machinist. You have

> to listen to what the people say, and if someone shows you a pattern, then you have to do like that. So, if you can do that, you can be a machinist (Interview 12).

According to the findings of Joynt & Webster (2016), garment workers employed at CMTs were found to have predominantly been men migrant workers from Malawi, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Botswana, and Mozambique. These garment workers are often more skilled than the local labour as they carry advanced skills and experience in sewing and embroidery that they acquired from their country of origin (Joynt & Webster, 2016), as in the case of both Dan and Samson.

On the contrary, only two participants in this study held gender-biased beliefs on labour. These participants expressed that they believed that women were better suited as garment workers as women were inherently good at sewing. Sarah, a small informal factory machinist employed at a factory dominated by women garment workers explained to me that she had initially learnt to hand sew from her mother as a young girl. However, she had only learnt to sew on an industrial sewing machine later in her life. According to Sarah, she learnt the skills to be a machinist through learning from an older Chinese woman whom she worked for at her very first garment related job and she also learned through some self-teaching. Sarah stated that in her perspective and experience in the garment industry she felt that women were better at sewing and the making of garments than men were. She held the opinion that women could sew better and work quicker: "you can see that I have seen that only ladies are special for that sewing, women are just working better and quickly" (Interview 4). Moreover, she stated that when it came to work ethic in the factory, men had a good work ethic and knew how to get the job done yet they did not know how to work neatly nor sew well "but males you can see that there's someone who knows how to work so nice but not clean or sew" (Interview 4). Similarly, this view was shared by Lydia who was also employed at a garment factory dominated by women garment workers: "The ladies here are sewing better than the men, but the men work nice." (Interview 10). When asked what she meant by this Lydia could not explain further.

<u>Gender and Workplace Relations</u>

In terms of the factory ownership, four out of the five factories where the participants were employed were owned by men, except for one of the informal factories that was fully women owned. All the factory owners were found to be South African nationals of various races, consisting of one White owner, two Black owners and two Indian owners. The supervisors at

the factories were a mix of both males and females with no particular gender to be found commonly occurring in that role.

In relation to gender and workplace treatment, the garment workers in this study reported that the men and women garment workers were treated equally by the supervisors regardless of the gender of their supervisors, with the exception of Stella who specifically mentioned that she and her colleagues were treated well because of the gender of the owners: "You see one thing about the company is that it is women-owned so my bosses treat me very well, like my own sisters and they do treat us all the same." (Interview 1).

The factory owners and supervisors in this study expressed that gender was not a factor they considered during the hiring process of garment workers. Rather, it was whether the candidate met the skill and experience requirements for a machinist or garment factory worker. Yolandey, noted that the machinists would often have to demonstrate that they could operate a sewing machine during the hiring process but the general garment workers such as the checkers, packers and receivers were hired based on their CV as their roles were lower-skilled and they usually received training prior to them starting to work. Tyler, a formal factory owner, mentioned that his factory had 70% of male garment workers and only 30% of female garment workers (Interview 2). Moreover, Tyler stated: "So when I'm looking, I'm looking for a machinist. So, it makes no difference whether they are a male or female. So, if they have the skill, I will hire them" (Interview 2). Similarly, David, a factory manager at a formal factory stated that they do not have any preference when it comes to hiring garment workers. He expressed that proof of this was the mixed-gender composition of garment workers at the factory which was 60% female and 40%, male. Lastly, Stella expressed:

> Normally, when we are looking, we look for someone with good sewing skills. Someone who can speak and who can write. They do not have to have a qualification, as long as they can communicate with the client and tell them whatever they need and direct them with what they want... (Interview 1).

While gender preferences might not have been part of the hiring process, several participants expressed that there were gender preferences in the workplace environment amongst the workers. Lauren, who worked in a factory with the gender composition of garment workers of 60% female and 40% male (Interview 10; Interview 9), explained to me that based on her years

of experience in the industry, she preferred working with men rather than women (Interview 10). She explained that this was the case because men were always willing to do the work without complaints, without mood swings and were likely to be present at work more often than women. On the contrary, she stated that women were more likely to have different mood swings every day, making it difficult for her to ask the workers for the production (Interview 10). Women were also more likely the ones who started gossip in the factories which led to the formation of different cliques on the factory floor, which added tension in the workplace environment (Interview 10). Lauren expressed that:

> We woman you can't run away from the woman thing but in the factory, we are trying like in the morning we start, we get in and we have a prayer session every morning and then we talk to each other to motivate each other and lighten the mood and address conflicts between the staff. Like if someone tramp someone's toes, I tell them they can come to me, and we can resolve the issue because we spend most hours here. We only go home to sleep and come back again the whole day we are here so we can't be angry the whole day we have to be happy. I also motivate my staff to wake up and have a positive attitude so they can come here and enjoy the day. There must also not be this thing of cliques and this group and that group because it kills the production, we all need to help each other be in one spirit (Interview 10).

Lauren stated that to break the tension and create a sense of togetherness they held a team meeting every morning. These sessions involved discussing goals for the day or week as any other staff meeting. However, Lauren stated that it was the prayer session and the socialising session that was key to creating unity amongst the staff. These sessions involved the factory team holding a Christian prayer session which usually included one person loudly praying for the well-being of all staff members, the strength, and the ability to meet the production targets and for them to keep a team spirit. This was followed by a short motivational speech wherein the floor supervisors motivated the factory staff to work hard and motivated the staff to have good team spirit and work well with each other. In addition, the supervisors encouraged the factory staff to socialise with each other and clear any grievances they had with each other so that they began the day on a clean slate and on a positive note (Interview 10).

According to Lauren, women garment workers' work ethic was more likely to be affected by their personal lives. They were more likely to have been absent from work or had their work ethic affected by their personal lives. Lauren stated:

> They (men) are not fussy. Women they've got some days you know, today I'm not okay, today I must take the baby to the clinic… blah, blah blah but with the men, you won't get that. It is not that I'm saying the women must not work but they (men) are there to help you, especially when you are battling with the production. Also, most of us like blacks, we don't have helpers to help us so if you've got a baby you need to take the baby to the clinic for check-ups. You can't ask Aunty to help you. If the baby is not feeling okay, you have to be there. You have to be absent from work and you have to be there. If the baby was troubling you at night, you won't be able to work in a proper way as you are tired (Interview 9).

Similarly, Lauren's perspective was shared by Stella: "To be honest it's better to work the men because when it's time to do the work they do it, on the other hand with women there's too much gossip and they argue with you and all those things… you know how women are." (Interview 1). Stella stated that even though many of her colleagues in the factory space were men, she experienced difficulties working with the few women that were employed at the factory. According to Stella, the women were difficult to work with as they would argue with her in the factory about who was responsible for certain tasks. Additionally, she stated that the women gossiped a lot which created tension. The women Stella worked with usually gossiped about each other. The gossip was usually work related with the women talking behind each other's back about how some workers were not working or how they were doing their jobs incorrectly (Interview 1). Stella stated that the workplace tension greatly affected the production process as the tension was typically felt by the entire factory staff on the factory floor given that they all worked in a small space and were reliant on each other's labour to complete production.

Lauren and Stella both attributed the changes in mood and the gossiping as womanly traits: "we women like gossip. It's a woman thing, we woman you can't run away from the woman thing" (Interview 9). The other participants in the study took no specific stance when asked which gender they prefer working with. Most of these participants vaguely stated that they do

not mind working with either, however, no participant specified that they prefer working with women over men.

Gossip has always been associated with women but the connection between women and negative gossip appears to be more than just a stereotype (McAndrew, 2014). Research over the decade indicates that women are not blatantly aggressive with each other. Instead, they use "social intelligence to manipulate relationships" (Crick *et al*., 2002 as cited in Crothers *et al*., 2009, p. 102). Crothers *et al*., (2009) argues that workplace bullying specifically done by women is a form of covert 'relational aggression' that often threatens friendships or relationships through the damage of reputation, the manipulation of relationships and the isolation of others. According to Crothers *et al*., (2009), relational aggression can include behaviours emotionally hurtful behaviours such as gossiping and socially excluding someone from a group, through forming workplace cliques (Crothers *et al*, 2009; McAndrew, 2014). They note that though both men and women partake in workplace bullying, the bullying done by women is qualitatively different from peer harassment done by men (Crothers *et al*, 2009). One possibility for why women adopt a more covert approach to bullying could be that this type of aggression does not damage the image of the female gender role, despite socio-cultural progression gender roles in society continue to appropriate certain behaviours for men and women. Moreover, they argue that "females demonstrate their need for superiority, control, and power differently through a set of behaviours known as relational aggression" (Crothers *et al*, 2009, p.102) often victimising other women 90% of the time (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2006, as cited in Crothers *et al*, 2009). Crothers *et al* (2009) noted that relational aggressions in the workplace for victims was associated with lower job satisfaction, increased job stress and distress in friendships (Hickman, 2006, as cited in Crothers *et al*, 2009). Both accounts of workplace gossip by Lauren and Stella resonate with relational aggression as a form of workplace bullying. Both participants noted that gossiping resulted in formation of cliques, social exclusion of others, damaged the reputation of workers and created negative tensions in the work environment (Interview 10; Interview 1).

This chapter gave an overview of contemporary garment factories located in Johannesburg regarding the different types of garment factories, their links to the supply chain and their set up. Additionally, this section provided a detailed description of the nature of the work processes involved in the manufacturing of garments and the working conditions in the garment factories. The working conditions were investigated in terms of working hours, wages, job security,

unionisation, physical and environmental condition, and safety. The second section focused on the gender composition of garment workers and how gender discourses affected workplace relations in garment factories. Moving to the following chapter, I will discuss the experiences of women garment workers in negotiating the stresses of paid and unpaid labour.

5 . Experiences of women employed in the garment industry with multiple forms of labour.

Women's experience with paid labour was experienced through the treatment they received at the workplace, wages earned, their working environment, tasks they spent doing whilst on the job, lengthy travel time to and from work and stressful situations in the workplace. Women's experience with unpaid labour was experienced through their daily participation in social reproductive labour which included cooking, cleaning, childcare, care for others and self-care.

5.1 The daily experiences of paid and unpaid social reproductive labour by women employed in the garment industry.

All the women garment workers in this study reported participating in unpaid social reproductive labour in some form or another when they returned home after a full day of participating in paid garment work. Based on the interviews it was found that they shared a similar experience, as the unpaid social reproductive labour took on a gendered nature. The social reproductive labour was gendered in nature as women mainly took on this type of unpaid labour whereas men only played a partial role.

Rose, a 27-year-old general garment factory worker and a mother of a seven-year-old daughter reported that she worked a minimum of eight hours; 7:30 am - 4:30 pm, sometimes until 5:30 pm. She often worked five days a week, Monday-Friday, and occasionally on Saturdays for five hours; 8 am – 1pm, if the factory was busy, with Sunday's being her only rest day. A typical workday for Rose usually began at around 5:30 am. When she awoke, she firstly woke up her seven-year-old daughter, bathed her daughter, dressed her for school, and made her daughter some porridge for breakfast. She would then get herself ready for the workday and then Rose and her daughter usually left the house by 6:30 am. To get to work, Rose took a taxi from Berea to the garment factory situated in Troyeville. However, before Rose would arrive at work, she dropped off her daughter at school. Once at work Rose, who was a general garment worker and a checker - spent long hours on her feet checking all finished garments such as cleaning uniforms, t-shirts, jackets and caps and hats. She checked the garments both inside and outside for material defects, stitching defects, loose buttons, or loose threads. She also checked if the labels on the garments had been sewn on correctly and decided which garments needed to be put aside as rejects or be returned to the machinists for alterations. In addition, Rose's work responsibilities included cleaning the garment factory, she swept, mopped, and

packed away boxes. Rose expressed that she worked in a safe working environment and had never been injured in the workplace. She also stated that she and the rest of the employees in the factory were treated well, however she did mention that sometimes the owner of the factory could be short-tempered and would yell at employees when targets needed to be met and when mistakes were made by workers, as previously mentioned. (Interview 5)

Once Rose finished work, she took a taxi to her daughter's school that was located in Berea near her home, picked her up and they walked home. When Rose arrived home, she gave her daughter a bath, cooked dinner, and tidied up her living space. After dinner Rose spent time helping her daughter with her school homework and assignments. Afterwards, she would put her daughter to bed. Rose then prepared her daughter's lunch for school for the following day, and she then prepared food for her partner who worked during the night. Once she was done with cooking, cleaning, and childcare for the night, Rose got herself ready for the night and went to sleep at around 11:00 pm. Similarly, Sarah, a mother of four children ranging in ages from 8 years old to 23 years old and whose husband was a taxi driver during the day, reported: "In the morning when I wake up, I do all those kinds of work. After work, again I also do the same thing" (Interview 5), with no mention of her partner contributing or playing a role in social reproductive labour in their home.

While Rose and Sarah were the only two garment workers who reported living with a partner, both expressed that they took on the majority of the social reproductive labour. The literature indicates that most women employed in the textile and clothing industry are from single-headed households and are mostly the sole breadwinners in their family (Tager, 2016; Van der Westhuizen, 2007; Jaga, 2020). The family structure in South Africa is predominantly characterised by female-headed households which is directly related to the legacy of apartheid and the racial and gendered hierarchies that resulted from it (see Tager, 2016; Van der Westhuizen, 2007; Bezuidenhout & Fakier, 2006; Jaga, 2020 in literature review).

Rose stated that while her husband only worked a nightshift, during the day, he sometimes did help her out with chores around the house. He only did a few tasks. He washed the dishes, occasionally did some cleaning, picked up their daughter from school and took care of her (Interview 8). However, she stated that most of the time her partner either slept or relaxed (Interview 8). These findings on the role of men in social reproductive labour in the home were further supported by the experiences of the male garment workers in this study employed in Johannesburg. According to Samson, his wife and his 14-year-old daughter, the eldest out of

three children, took on the majority of the social reproductive labour in his home: “My first born she is cooking sometimes…but especially my wife and my kids are doing the cleaning, cooking and all those things” (Interview 13). Samson stated that he did not participate in social reproductive labour as he was often too tired when he returned home from working in the factory, but he stated that he did assist his wife on Sundays as it was the only day he did have off from work (Interview 11).

Similarly, Dan stated that he did not have much to do when he arrived home from work: “No... I don’t have many things to do at home... Once I get home, I find my wife do everything for me…but sometimes I’m trying to help her” (Interview 13). According to Dan, when he arrived home, he was exhausted and thus had to rest: “Once I reach home, I tell my wife to give me some time to rest and bath then I can try to help her when I’m finished rest” (Interview 13). The wives of Samson and Dan both had jobs of their own. According to Samson, his wife worked as a waitress and cook in a small café in the Johannesburg CBD (Interview 13). Similarly, Dan stated: “My wife, she is a businesswoman, she is working in town every day and she is selling some cakes that she makes at home” (Interview 13). Both women with partners in this study spent the majority of their time outside of paid labour partaking in social reproductive labour, much like women in the study without partners such as the case of Lydia.

Lydia, a 48-year-old machinist employed at a formal garment factory and a single mother of three children ages; 10, 16 and 25 years-old reported that a typical working day for her began at 3:00 am. In the early hours of the morning when Lydia awakened, she did a multitude of chores around the house, washed the clothing, cleaned the house, and prepared food for her two youngest children and then lastly, she took a bath and got herself ready for the working day. Lydia left the house at 6:00 am and took a taxi from Orange Farm to Selby, where the garment factory was located, which was usually a 45 minute or an hour journey.

Once Lydia arrived and started working at 7:30 am she spent her day as a safety and cover seam machinist who sewed together pre-cut fabric pieces to produce finished garments. In addition to this, Lydia stated that she also did the binding, seaming, and added extras like buttons to the clothing. Lydia expressed that she worked in a safe working environment, was treated well by the supervisors when she was up to speed and met production targets on time. Lydia finished work at 4:30 pm and arrived home between 6:00 pm and 6:30 pm.



Figure 4: Machine used by machinists at garment factory (D), Source: Google.

Unlike Rose, Lydia did not need to pick her children up from school as her middle child took care of her youngest by dropping him off at school, picking him up from school and taking care of him once they were at home. When Lydia arrived home, she tidied the house again, cooked dinner for herself and her children, prepared lunch boxes for her children, bathed her youngest children, and ensured they went to bed. Once Lydia took care of the chores around the house and the children, she then could focus on herself. She took a bath, watched some TV before going to sleep at around 10 pm. (Interview 12)

According to this study, it was found that the women spent long hours partaking in paid labour and much of their time outside of paid labour in the factory partaking in unpaid social reproductive labour - their mornings; evenings after work and weekends were spent partaking in social reproductive labour. Moreover, both women with and without partners carried the burden of social reproductive labour in the home. While women with partners such as in the case of Rose, did have support and the occasional sharing of the workload in the home, there were no drastic differences in the times women spent partaking in social reproductive labour between women without partners and women with partners. Unpaid social reproductive work in the home has always been socially constructed as gendered 'women's work' and is still mostly performed by women (Federici, 2012). Moreover, Geldenhuys (2011) notes that women do more unpaid social reproductive labour than men all across the globe and South African women on average dedicate 180 minutes of their time on unpaid labour each day, whereas men

only spend 80 minutes on these tasks per day. The experiences of the women garment workers in this study indicated that both paid and unpaid social reproductive labour, the double burden of labour as a whole, was the main activity of their lives as it was predominantly all that consumed their time.

Moreover, paid, and unpaid social reproductive labour served as central aspects that determined how the women structured their lives. Most women did not mention partaking in any other leisurely activities during the week, apart from watching TV. This was only done once both paid labour and social reproductive labour was complete for the day, "When I get home at 5:30pm I cook and do some cleaning if my partner didn't do it then I sit with my child and do some homework, then we watch TV, bath, and sleep" (Interview 7), " No, I work late hours because what happens when I reach home, if I can start resting, I won't cook I will fall asleep. but after I cook, I have some time to watch TV until the TV watches me so until I fall asleep because I'm tired" (Interview 10). In terms of weekends, only one woman mentioned that they partook in other activities outside of labour. Stella, the youngest participant (23-years-old), stated that she usually jogged on weekends and she stated that "Sometimes if my mom or sister can babysit my daughter then I go out with my friends... you know like get dressed nice and go out to get some food and all that stuff but sometimes I also go out on play dates with my daughter and my friends and their kids" (Interview 1). Overall women spent their days navigating between paid and unpaid labour.

The reliance on unpaid care work from others

From the study, it was found that all the women relied on the unpaid social reproductive labour of other women in their daily lives. Most women reported that other women, specifically family members that they resided with or lived nearby either cleaned, cooked, or took care of their children when the women could not, due to them having to be at work at the factories or attend to other responsibilities. Stella stated that during the week her sister and her mother, who both resided with her, did most of the cleaning, cooking, and childcare (they took care of her two-year-old daughter during the day). Stella, a single mother, expressed that having her sister and mother do these tasks was a major relief because she did not have to stress about doing some of these tasks when she got home from work. She also explained that because her sister did these tasks when she got home, she only had to tidy up and take care of her daughter. However, she expressed that because she did not do the major house chores during the week; Stella spent

her weekends spring-cleaning the house because it was only fair for her to clean on the weekend as her sister did the cleaning during the working week.

Similarly, Rose and Sharon who both worked on Saturdays also relied on the unpaid social reproductive labour from other women. Mainly, to care for their young children while they were at work. According to Sharon: "I am the one who is cooking and taking care of her every day after work, but on Saturdays when I work my cousin is the one who is taking care of her" (Interview 7). It is also important to note that none of the women relied on commodified social reproductive labour from other women such as paid domestic workers or nannies. As expressed by Lauren above "Also most of us like blacks don't have helpers to help us so if you've got a baby you need to take the baby to the clinic for check-ups you can't ask Aunty to help you" (Interview 10).

In addition to the reliance on unpaid social reproductive labour from other women, it was found that some of the participants relied on the unpaid social reproductive labour from their older children. These children were all girls. Patience, a mother of two children, ages 13 and 17-years-old, explained that because she left her home in the early hours of the morning and only returned home after 6:00 pm, she relied on her oldest daughter to do cooking, cleaning and to care for her of her youngest child in her absence. Likewise, Sarah also expressed that she relied on her two oldest daughters, aged 12 and 22 years old, to do the cooking, cleaning, and pick up her youngest children from school, feed them once at home and oversee their homework and care for them until she arrived home in the evening. The only participant that was exempt from relying on others for unpaid social reproductive labour was Lauren. Lauren stated "I am doing all that because my last born is lazy I have to force him to do the things in the house. For him to clean the house I have to force him, and we fight. For him, it's just to get the food, eat and then go to sleep" (Interview 10).

This gendered nature of the reliance of children for some forms of social reproduction could be linked to the socialisation of gender roles, according to Leaper & Freidman (2007). Social contexts reproduce and perpetuate gender roles and inequalities in larger society (Leaper & Freidman, 2007). A child's gender determines what activities they partake in which is influenced and transformed by family, peers, and social media (Leaper & Freidman, 2007). In terms of household labour, when there are limited family resources such as low-income, single-headed households and large family sizes, similar to that of the women in this study. Then it is more likely that there is a gendered assignment in household chores – with daughters likely

assigned to childcare responsibilities. Moreover, in cultures and social contexts characterised by a traditional gendered division of labour between men and women, childcare and parenting in the home are more likely to encourage girls to take on caring responsibilities more than boys (Wood & Eagly, 2002). Based on various studies in North America, it was found that gender socialisation occurs through parenthood. Parents who adopt traditional gendered division of labour in their household responsibilities influences children's outlooks on gendered household chores (Leaper & Freidman, 2007). Secondly, parents allocate their children gendered household chores – parents typically allocate childcare and cleaning to daughters whereas sons typically get maintenance work (Leaper & Freidman, 2007). In addition, girls more than boys are likely to be given household chores during childhood and adolescence (Leaper & Freidman, 2007). Overall, gendered household chores for children conveys lessons to children about the responsibilities for men and women. Moreover, children's experience of a gendered division of labour contributes to their later notions of obligations and expectations in terms of housework.

5.2 The Interplay between paid and unpaid labour for women employed as garment factory workers.

Women employed as garment workers experienced their daily lives through a cycle, transitioning from paid labour in the factory to unpaid social reproductive labour in the home, back to paid labour, etc. Based on the study it was found that women did not experience these two forms of labour independently as they often affected each other. The women's many responsibilities occasionally overlapped into the dedicated set period for paid and unpaid labour. This was found to be in the form of working overtime, working on weekends, taking work home, having to attend to childcare responsibilities during working hours, and not receiving adequate rest. Most women in the study reported that they experienced the interplay and overlap between paid and unpaid labour in these forms.

Lauren stated that based on her experience as a former machinist, supervisor, and currently a production director in the factory, she has seen how this double burden of labour affected women and interfered with paid labour in the factory (Interview 10). Lauren expressed that with women in the factory, there were often times when the garment workers would call into work to excuse themselves because they need to attend to the needs of their children, and they

would have no option but to be with their children in times of need, especially the single mothers (Interview 10). She explained that most times the women would call and state that their children were sick, or they needed to take their children for check-ups to the clinic. Therefore, they were not able not to go into work that day or the women would receive calls from their children's school which required the women to leave work midway through the working day and attend to their children (Interview 10). Moreover, Lauren stated that social reproductive responsibilities in the home also affected the performance at work, as she would notice that sometimes when some of the women in the factory were working at a slow pace, making mistakes while sewing or appeared specifically sleep-deprived, the women would tell her that they had to stay awake throughout the previous night as they had to take care of their child that was not well (Interview 10). Many of the women in the study reported similar accounts to the accounts stated by Lauren. Sarah expressed that on a typical working day her mornings were extremely busy from the time she woke up, as she did her house chores and childcare during that period which would often result in her running late for work. In addition, she stated that there were occasions where she had to be absent from work to attend to her younger children when they were not well, and she was often the parent who would stay at home as opposed to her partner (Interview 5). Similarly, Rose stated: "Ya… eish it is difficult... especially because my child is young and sometimes the school will phone to say she is sick, and I have to pick her up or stay at home to take care" (Interview 8). In addition, Rose also expressed that it was not only childcare that affected her paid job but also her care for others as Rose occasionally needed to accompany her ill mother to the clinic which required her to be absent from work.

Besides social reproductive labour, specifically the care for others affecting paid labour, the majority of the women in the study reported that paid labour affected the amount of time they spent in the home. The women felt as if there was not enough time for social reproductive labour and spending quality time with their family members due to the amount of time spent travelling to and from work as well as the working hours themselves.

Some women reported that while the weekends were the only 'free' time they had available to rest and spend with their family. They mostly used that time to do their weekly spring cleaning or other chores as there was not enough time during the week, Stella noted that: "during the week majority of my free time at home and then I do the spring cleaning on weekends when I'm not working" (Interview 1). The women also expressed that they felt that there was not

enough time to spend with their families. Lydia, a single mother, explained that sometimes she was unable to be present with her children in times of need such as doctor visits. She also missed events at their school because she could not take off from work. Instead, she called her children's father to be there when she could not. However, she explained that he was not always reliable:

> There is not enough time for both, sometimes I must be absent to be with my kids or sometimes I need to call the father of the kids to take them to the doctor or to go with them... eish but…sometimes he is busy or something (Interview 11).

According to Chauke & Khunou (2014), there is a high prevalence of father absence in South Africa that is related to apartheid and the former migrant labour system. Moreover, Patel & Muvungu (2018) note that the high rates of father absence appear to have been on the rise since the end of apartheid. Father absence has to do with physical absence due to distance or divorce or emotional absence (absence from child's life regardless of distance) (Patel & Muvungu, 2018). In South Africa, father-absence is due to urban-rural migration, delayed marriages, poverty, unemployment, and the growing autonomy of women (Patel & Muvungu, 2018). Furthermore, in a highly patriarchal society both men and women are often seen to hold problematic gender beliefs such as the belief that women are solely responsible for childcare (Patel & Muvungu, 2018). Overall, "women and children are likely to bear the greatest burden as a result of father absence" (Patel & Muvungu, 2018.p.23). Majority of the single mothers in this study made no mention of the father of their children being involved in their lives. Lydia was the only single mother in this study that made mention of the father of her children being somewhat involved in their lives by sometimes being available to take care of her children.

In addition, some women in the study stated that because of having to work on Saturdays and working overtime they felt as if there was not enough time between paid and unpaid labour as it was difficult to split time between spending time with their family members, house chores and work. Sharon explained that because she worked during the week and on Saturdays, her daughter spent more time with her grandmother than with her. Moreover, she expressed that she was concerned that her daughter developed a better relationship and was more attached to her grandmother as she only spent one day out of the whole week with her daughter. Similarly, Patience expressed that:

> Ya… with kids you know there is not enough time to spend with them and at home. I am a single mother since my husband died so everything is on me and me alone with the kids, with the house and family (Interview 4).

According to Chodorow (1978), women take primary responsibility for childcare and the care of others as rather than men as women are assumed to have a natural connection between childbearing and the responsibility for childcare, which often results in women's mothering to be taken for granted. Moreover, women as mothers are central to social reproduction and social reproductive processes play a central role in the lives of women as social reproductive activities define the activities in the lives of women. Despite women's participation in the workforce, women's mothering is still a key component of the gendered division of labour (Chodorow, 1978). The experiences of the women in this study indicate conflicts between their work and home domains. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), a work-family conflict is defined as "a form of inter-role conflict, in which the demands of work and family roles are incompatible in some respect, so that participation in one role is more difficult because of participation in another role" (p.77). The women garment workers face challenges balancing the demands of work and those of their family life or specifically between paid and unpaid labour. "Basically, I live at work and sleep at home" (Interview 1). "We spend most hours here. We only go home to sleep and come back again the whole day we are here" (Interview 10).

<u>The interplay between paid and unpaid labour and the effects on the well-being</u>

It was determined that the working environment at garment factories affected the emotional state or mood of women in the study, which would spill over into their mood in their home life. Garment factory workers worked closely with each other, as there are many different phases a garment goes through from start to finish. This process involved the receivers, machinists, checkers, packers, cleaners, floor supervisors, production directors, factory owners, etc. Working closely with a variety of people to meet production targets created tensions and raised stress levels in the workplace between staff as aforementioned, which affected how they treated each other and on an individual level, and this affected the emotional state of workers.

According to Lauren, in her role as a production director she was not always serious and stern with the workers in the factory. Yet, when she required the team to work hard to meet production targets, she pushed the workers to get the work done. She was serious and stern with them in such times, which she stated, was not always received well by the garment

workers, as it would lead them to get a negative attitude with her that in turn would result in Lauren being in a bad mood for the rest of the day. Lauren expressed that sometimes she would even be in a bad mood when she returned home, and she would take it out on her children by shouting at them for no valid reason or it would result in her being in a bad emotional state which affected her productivity in her home, "You know when it is time to push for the production, some of the workers they get moods with you then then have a sulky face with you, then the production can be slow. like they can even make you to be in a bad mood the whole day till when you get at home. I can be angry, shouting at the kids or be in a bad mood till I don't want to do anything" (Interview 10).

Similarly, both Rose and Patience, who reported occasionally being loudly shouted at by the factory owner, stated that their emotional state was affected by the mistreatment as it left them with feelings of low self-esteem or made them angry towards their supervisor as Rose stated: "eish... you know it makes me feel bad because it's like I don't know if I am doing the right things here at work. Sometimes I will even feel like that the whole week" (Interview 8).

According to Mahmud *et al* (2018), female garment workers work long hours, and they are often forced to work overtime. Additionally, they had to do household chores, which ultimately makes their lives very busy leaving them with little to no time to enjoy any leisure (Mahmud *et al*., 2018). In a study conducted on female garment workers in Bangladesh, it was found that the lack of time spent on leisure contributed to psychological complications such as depression and anxiety (Mahmud *et al*., 2018). Węziak-Białowolska *et al* (2019) note that workers' mistreatment in garment industries by Human Resources and supervisors around the world aims to reduce production costs and achieve inflated production targets. In these cases, improvements in the workers well-being are viewed as costs rather than investments. Moreover, studies based on female garment workers in Mexico, Cambodia, China, and Sri-Lanka show that workplace mistreatment negatively affects job satisfaction, quality of work and job performance, which threatens workers' well-being. Workplace mistreatment was another source of psychological suffering; derogatory comments and verbal abuse such as yelling affected the dignity and psychological state for garment workers (Mahmud *et al*., 2018). The women in this study spent little to no time on leisure due to stresses from paid and unpaid labour and some women experienced workplace mistreatment as aforementioned.

In terms of paid labour and the effects on well-being of the women garment worker, both Gunawardana (2016) and Wright (2013) argue that mental and physical 'depletion' of garment

workers occurs every day through the demand for efficiency and productivity (outflows) in the factory that is not maintained by sufficient inputs (inflows) such as adequate rest, job security, adequate wages, etc. While factory workers face low-wages, long working hours, and conditions that damage their bodies and psyches (Al-Hindi, 2008; Wright, 2013). In terms of unpaid labour, Rai *et al* (2014) discuss depletion in relation to social reproduction or unpaid domestic care. According to Rai *et al* (2014), depletion occurs when women give more than they put in, "when there is a critical gap between the outflows— domestic, affective, and reproductive—and the inflows that sustain their health and well-being" (p. 86) such as adequate rest. This "manifests in bodily exhaustion, sleeplessness, tiredness, mental feelings, and lack of leisure time" (Rai *et al*, 2014, p. 863) which affects the women's ability to carry out social reproductive labour. Based on the literature above, both paid labour and unpaid labour serve to threaten the well-being of female garment workers.

The interplay between paid and unpaid labour for women employed in the garment industry also had long-term effects. Sarah explained to me that a few years ago when she was pregnant with her now, eight-year-old twins, she had initially gone on maternity leave but after her children were born, she did not return to work when she was expected to due to her being unable to find anyone to care for her children at the time. She left work for a period of three years. During that time, she took care of babies and her other two children and mostly spent her days in the home, cooking, cleaning, and doing child-care. She stated that at the time her partner was employed and was the main breadwinner in their home, which was a very difficult situation as they were struggling financially having been without her salary. However, during this time Sarah indicated that she did do small 'piece jobs' within her community such as the alterations of clothing, using her sewing machine at home, the making of dresses specifically for traditional events and the making of homeware such as pillowcases and quilts. Sarah stated that she charged a small fee to the members of her community to do these tasks. Even though it was not much, the little money she did earn did make a difference in the lives of her family, as at the time she had no other option as these jobs offered her the flexibility she needed to work, earn an income and care for her children until they were old enough to go to school.

On the other hand, Lauren shared a very different account when asked if her home life affected her work life and vice versa. In Lauren's case, she expressed that she had felt both the need and the pressure to be at work for the duration of her pregnancy except for the last two weeks as her role in the factory as a supervisor was vital to the production team:

> I see it happen a lot with the others in the factory as I've said but, on my side, I'm a kind of a person that when I work, I work, and I forget about everything else. Like my last-born is 22 years old. I got pregnant with that baby, up until 9 months I was working as a supervisor in the factory running up and down without any pain from day one up until 9 months. Then I told my boss, now I have to stop and go home otherwise I will end up having the baby here. So, it was only two weeks (Interview 10).

After giving birth to her baby Lauren expressed that it was not long before she returned to work to resume her duties as a garment factory supervisor. In Sarah's case, her unpaid social reproductive labour and responsibilities affected her paid labour whereas in the case of Lauren her paid labour and responsibilities affected her the amount of rest and maternity leave that she would have medically normally required during her pregnancy, which would have been a total of four months according to law.

According to the law, South African employees are entitled to 4 months of unpaid maternity leave (The South African Labour Guide). Employees are required to give their employer a months' notice before commencing maternity leave. Maternity leave should begin one month before the due date of the child (The South African Labour Guide). During this time employees should claim benefits from the department of labour, through the national unemployment insurance fund (UIF). Maternity leave does not affect annual leave, whether paid or unpaid and the employer is obliged to hold the employee's job open for her to return from a period of maternity leave (The South African Labour Guide). Typically, the garment industry worldwide is associated with exploiting pregnant workers. In a study on labour laws in the garment industry in four countries (China, Mexico, Nicaragua, and the Philippines), it was found that though there are established labour laws to protect workers, pregnant workers face discrimination, abuse, and exploitation (Barnes & Kozar, 2008). Pregnant workers in the garment industry are often forced to work overtime, they lack the necessary benefits, face unfair dismissal and they are forced to take on job assignments that require heavy physical labour which is harmful to the well-being of the worker and unborn child (Barnes & Kozar, 2008). Similar instances on the mistreatment and exploitation of pregnant garment workers have been reported at garment factories in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (Islam & Rakib,2019; Ruwanpura, 2016).

Overall, every day for female garment workers was not just a day of production but also of social reproduction, with no clear boundaries between the two. Moreover, men played a minimal role in sharing of the workload, meaning that women with and without partners spend around the same amount of time on social reproductive labour. In addition, women had to rely on other women and children to take on their social reproductive labour, specifically childcare in times when they could not. Lastly, the lack of time spent on leisurely activities, workplace mistreatment, pressures to work overtime all pose a threat to the well-being of the garment workers. I now move to analyse and discuss how women experience and understand the various roles they take on in their lives.

6 . How women employed in garment factories in Johannesburg make meaning and understand their roles.

Narratives that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with women employed in garment factories from this study have indicated that the women made their own meaning to construct how they understand and perceive themselves, their various roles they took on such as mother, daughter, sister, partner, garment worker, etc, and the various life events, situations and positions they had found themselves to be in such as the head of their household, the main breadwinner, unemployment, and bereavement.

6.1 How Women make meaning of their roles as Providers

According to the data, most of the women were from single-headed households, except for two women, who reported that they had partners as aforementioned. All the women in the study reported that they were mothers who not only financially supported their children and their nuclear families, in most cases as the sole breadwinner. Additionally, these women financially provided support to their extended family members; in some cases, some women even stated that they financially supported multiple families.

Sarah explained to me that she financially provided for her partner and her four children, but she also stated that she provided for her brother's four children: "It is my kids which are four and then it is my brother's kids which are also another four so its eight kids all together… it's too much, it is too much for me…" (Interview 4). In total Sarah financially provided for nine people including herself. When asked why she supported her brother's children, Sarah expressed that her brother and his wife were both unemployed and thus it was her responsibility as the oldest sister to make sure that they had food to eat. Moreover, she stated that while she did have other siblings, she was the main financial provider to her brother and his family. When asked how she felt about having to support her brother and his family, Sarah explained that it was too much for her to handle financially because her partner was not always supportive of her giving her money to her brother as often as she did. This disagreement often led to arguments between the two of them. However, she stated that her partner did not understand because he did not have any other siblings, nor did he understand how it felt, as a mother, to see children without things that other children around them had.

Sarah understood and made meaning of her multiple roles as a sister, aunt, and mother through the obligation and responsibility she perceived towards her brother and his family which she constructed through supporting his family despite her partner's objection on and her limited

financial situation as she did not earn a lot of money as a part-time machinist at a small-scale informal factory. In addition, she lacked job security and received no benefits. Like the case of Sarah, when asked how many people she financially supports, Patience similarly reported: "Eish… I cannot count but I support two families" (Interview 4). Patience was informally employed on a part-time basis in a small-scale garment factory. She expressed that as a widow, with two children, it was financially difficult for her, however, she stated that she had to take care of her parents, as it was her duty to do so.

The women's roles as providers can be understood using the concept of 'Black Tax'. Black Tax refers to both social and economic support that is provided to parents or other family members, outside of their living expenses by employed black South Africans (Mhlongo, 2019). Black Tax can take form on monetary remittances, and it can be in the form of purchasing goods and services such as houses, school fees, food, and clothing (Magubane, 2016) or it could be opening one's home for family members who are going through a difficult time financially (Mhlongo, 2019). Black Tax is a daily reality for many black South Africans that is expected from both sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters (Mhlongo, 2019). Mangoma &Wilson-Prangley (2018) analyse Black Tax as a form remittance practice. According to Mangoma &Wilson-Prangley (2018), Black Tax is often experienced as a pressure to financially provide for family in a broad family network whilst simultaneously providing for themselves. Sarah and Patience both financially provided for their extended family members as they felt as if it is their responsibility and duty to do so. Mosoetsa (2011) notes that in many South African households, the threat of poverty and unemployment results in vulnerable people relying on their family and kinship networks to survive. It is common for households with stable incomes to become overcrowded with many generations living together in one household as people seek refuge to secure income and food. Mosoetsa (2011) states that providing for extended family members is not viewed as a survival strategy. Rather, it is viewed as a natural phenomenon in the culture. Moreover, women are central caregivers and providers to extended family members (Mosoetsa, 2011), as in the case of Sarah and Patience. Similarly, Lauren stated that she raised, housed, and provided for her nephew:

> I've got two kids. one is my late younger sister's son. The bigger son is 37. My second born daughter is 23 and then the last born is 21. The last born is my late sister's son he is like my

son because I raised him from three years old up until now so it's not like I'm his aunt, I'm his mum (Interview 10).

Women view this as their extended parental responsibilities and grandmothers are central household members due to their access to social grants and government housing (Mosoetsa, 2011).

6.2 How women make meaning as migrant labourers

Unlike local South African garment workers, the two migrant women in the study make meaning around migration, livelihoods, paid labour, and the maintenance of their families in their country of origin. In addition, livelihood strategies, labour skills, and practices established in the migrant women's country of origin allowed them to access employment in the city of Johannesburg. Both Stella a Ndebele from Zimbabwe and Lydia, a migrant from Lesotho stated that they left their countries of origin to migrate to South Africa as migration presented itself as an opportunity to establish a secure livelihood for themselves and improve their family's livelihoods that remained in their country of origin. Thus, staying at home and relying on a partner was never an option for these women.

Migration and Livelihoods

According to Lydia, her migration to South Africa from Lesotho was mainly motivated by employment. She stated that she migrated from Lesotho to South Africa some twelve years ago as she was in search of better employment opportunities as she sought to earn more money than she was earning in Lesotho at the time, as her husband had suddenly passed on leaving her widowed with young children to care and provide for. In addition, Lydia stated that her migration to South Africa presented itself as an opportunity to start a new life after the death of her husband, which was a very difficult time for her. Moreover, she stated that it was very common for people in Lesotho to migrate to South Africa in search of better employment opportunities, and she knew many people who had done so, which had also been a factor that encouraged her migration. Before Lydia migrated to South Africa, she had worked in a garment and textile factory as a machinist. Thus, her established livelihood practices in her country of origin allowed her to establish livelihood strategies in Johannesburg, as she knew she already

held the skills required to secure employment in Johannesburg working in the garment industry as a livelihood strategy.

Similarly in the case of Stella's migration, employment was the main driving force for her migration to South Africa. However, Stella's migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa was not initially carried out through her agency. According to Stella, she migrated to South Africa when she was twelve years old as her mother sought out a better life for the family. Stella explained to me that fourteen years ago her mother had felt that the economic conditions in Zimbabwe, characterised by hyperinflation and economic decline and instability at the time were not beneficial to herself nor her children hence they migrated to South Africa so her mother could access or establish better livelihood opportunities. Stella herself spent her time between Zimbabwe and South Africa as her father still resided in her country of origin. She did half of her high schooling in South Africa, returned to Zimbabwe for the remaining half, and a year after she finished school she returned to South Africa. Stella expressed that her permanent migration to Johannesburg was mainly due to the opportunity to establish or access secure livelihoods for herself as she stated that she could not find a well-paying job in Zimbabwe. In addition, her motivation to migrate was also fuelled by the support she would have in Johannesburg as her mother still resided here. Once Stella migrated to Johannesburg, she found a job working in a garment factory as a general worker and machinist in training. Unlike Lydia she stated that she did not have any previous skills as a garment factory worker, however, she did have really good work experience with communication and people skills that she acquired in Zimbabwe working in retail, which ultimately led her to her employment in the garment factory as her job as a general garment worker, employed at Factory (A), required her to deal with clients, receive deliveries of the fabric, do the buying and, handle the orders that needed to be shipped and deal with the couriers.



Figure 5 Factory (A): Stella's orders ready to be shipped out to clients.

The two male garment workers in this study were also migrants and their country of origin was Malawi. Samson (44 years old) learned to sew in Malawi when he was 18 years old and worked as a machinist there, prior to migrating to South Africa. According to Samson he migrated to South Africa from his country of origin in 2016. Samson stated that he made the decision to move to South Africa because he believed that there were better opportunities- more jobs available and higher paying jobs, than in his country of origin. Similarly, Dan (29 years old), was also motivated by the access to better employment and livelihood opportunities. Dan, who learnt to sew at 10 years old as aforementioned. Prior to migration Dan worked in Malawi as a machinist. Dan stated that back home in Malawi "The thing is in Malawi, there are jobs, but the thing is to get job is very difficult for you, if you didn't finish school. I didn't finish school, you see. So, it was difficult for me, but I can do other things without looking for job. I can do my own business, but to get the money to start is a problem. So, I saw that things weren't good for me" (Interview 9). Dan migrated to South Africa is 2014. He stated that his migration was also spurred on by his sister who migrated from Malawi to Johannesburg a few years before him. Dan's sister worked as an entrepreneur, selling clothing and shoes. According to Dan, his

sister would send money to him to buy the products in Malawi, as it was cheaper, and he would send it back to his sister and she would sell it in Johannesburg.

> One day I asked my sister if she can help me to give me some money. She said to me she can give me some money but if I really need it, she can just bring me here (Johannesburg) because here job is so easy, job is not that much problem so I can come and find any job and I also know how to sew, so it is not going to me long to get a job (Interview 9).

According to Isike & Isike (2012), since end of apartheid, South Africa has become the new destination for African migrants. Isike & Isike (2012) note that "African immigration to South Africa increased through the immigration of skilled professionals and other economic migrants from distressed economies but also through African migrants fleeing conflicts in their country of origin" (p.93), such as Zimbabwe, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Burundi (Isike & Isike, 2012). The attraction to South Africa as the chosen destination for many African migrants is due to the country's economic strength; "while there may be many destination options for Zimbabwean immigrants, South Africa attracted the majority of them because of the country's peculiar attraction to all sorts of professionals, technicians, skilled and semi-skilled people and workers" (Nwonwu, 2010, p.152 as cited in Isike & Isike, 2012).

Lydia, Stella, Samson, and Dan are all labour migrants who have mainly migrated and pursued the opportunity to access livelihoods with the use of former skills and experience gained in their countries of origin due to their inability to have accessed nor establish secure livelihood strategies in their country of origin. For Lydia, migrating from Lesotho to Johannesburg was also perceived and understood as a coping method to move on from the loss of her husband. Lydia's motivating factors for migration indicates that women migrate for more than just financial reasons as Kihato's (2007) study finds that some migrant women migrate out of their own yearning to travel and learn about new cultures regardless of material benefit.

Remittance Practices of Migrant Labours Employed as Garment Workers.

Remittance practices for the migrant women in this study were found to be a key practice attached to accessing livelihood strategies in Johannesburg. According to Ojong (2012), whenever someone leaves Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, etc. for South Africa, there is excitement

amongst the family members of the immigrant. This is because the family members of the immigrant expect their poverty to end once their relative reaches South Africa "through creation of a means to ensure prosperity" (Ojong, 2012, p.272). Once in South Africa, the immigrant is expected to work hard and remit sufficient money back to their families in their country of origin (Ojong, 2012).

Remittance practices usually involve the transfer of money from a migrant labourer to someone living abroad (Carling, 2014). Remittance practices also serve to represent specific functions, meanings and expectations that define social relationships and invoke certain feelings between the sender and receiver, which could be viewed as 'remittance scripts' (Carling, 2014). According to (Carling, 2014) "scripting remittances refers to the way in which remittance senders and recipients direct and make sense of their transactions by eliciting scripts" (p.222). Whether the remittance is a gift, to 'help' or sent out of obligation. Furthermore, these remittance scripts have expected feelings and behaviours attached to them such as feelings of gratitude and expected behaviours for appropriate uses of the money (Carling, 2014). Lydia and Stella both reported that they partook in remittance practices for their family members who remained in their country of origin, however, Lydia and Stella made meaning, perceived, and understood their role in remittance practices quite differently from each other.

Lydia expressed that she partook in remittance practices that have purely been one-sided, where she practised monetary and gift remittances to a family member in a different country. She stated that she had four children but her youngest two children, aged ten and seven were raised and resided in Lesotho with her mother as she could not provide the necessary care for them when they were babies due to her long working hours and her difficult living situation which only provided limited living space. Moreover, Lydia stated that it was a common practice for women to leave their children in Lesotho to stay by themselves in the care of older siblings or grandparents while they reside and work in Johannesburg. Lydia explained that she sent back money to her grandmother, often at the end of every month when she received her salary and occasionally twice a month when she was able to do so. The monetary remittances that Lydia sent back home were used to maintain the household and provide for both her mother and two children as their main source of income. Besides a monetary remittance, Lydia stated that she additionally would buy her children clothes, shoes, and school uniforms to send back to Lesotho for them. When asked how she felt about sending money back home Lydia stated:

> Sometimes the money for back home is not so much and sometimes, you know, it is difficult because I am having to support two families but I have to because those are my kids and my mother so it feels good to say I can take care of my mother and all my kids, you know after working the whole month (Interview 11).

Nevertheless, Lydia felt that she would have preferred to send more money to her family than she could, she still felt a sense of pride knowing that she provided for her family without the help of others. Based on a study on Lesotho migrants residing in South Africa, Crush & Dodson (2010) found that Lesotho female migrants remit more money than other African migrants. This could be because those residing in Lesotho have access to fewer livelihood strategies, and because dependence on migrant remittances is greater, often as the only source of income (Crush & Dodson, 2010), as in the case of Lydia and her family that remained in Lesotho. This was true for female-headed households, which made up a substantial percentage of Lesotho households-sending female migrants (Crush & Dodson, 2010). Overall, Crush & Dodson (2010) found that the monetary remittances by Lesotho female migrants were a key source of income and the remittance of goods that contributed "to the material welfare of households" (p. 53). Crush & Dodson (2010) found this to be the case of women migrants across various roles- household heads, mothers, or daughters.

Stella too, stated that she partook in remittance practices. However, in the case of Stella remittance practices were reciprocal between her and her family members in Zimbabwe. According to Stella, since she permanently migrated to Johannesburg, there have been instances where her father has sent her money from Zimbabwe that has helped her in times of financial difficulty. Additionally, Stella expressed that she infrequently remitted lesser amounts of money to her family in Zimbabwe, specifically to her younger step siblings. Stella stated that she did not know exactly what her monetary remittances were utilised for most of the time. She assumed it was used by her step sibling as pocket money. Moreover, Stella expressed that the only reason she sent remitted money to her family in Zimbabwe was that she felt pressured by her siblings who would constantly taunt her when they called her, comparing her to their other siblings, as they remitted money more often than she had done. She stated that her younger siblings overestimated how much money she earned and failed to understand the challenges she faced here in South Africa such as how expensive things are and her financial situation as a single mother, "you know people in Zimbabwe think we are earning millions here

in South Africa" (Interview 1). When asked how she felt about sending money back home, Stella expressed that she felt as though she was forced to send money back home, if she did not her family would have looked down on her and assumed that she did not care about them. Moreover, she stated that it was unfair of her to be expected to send money home as she had her child to take care of and provide for. Ojong (2012) notes, there are high expectations of the family members left behind in the country of origin. Based on Ojong's (2012) study, many African migrants living in South Africa often received letters and phone calls from their relatives back home, demanding money. The relatives would request unrealistic amounts of money for anything, from school fees to trips abroad, this created tensions between the immigrants and their families back home (Ojong, 2012). Moreover, if the immigrants in South Africa did not respond to the requests for money, "they would often be 'painted black' or (denigrated) by both their family members and community" (Ojong, 2012, p.273), as the fears Stella kept in mind. The general belief amongst other African's is that immigrants who do not participate in monetary remittances are selfish and the general sentiment is "'if things are really as difficult as some people abroad portray, then why are they still living there? They should come back home" (Ojong, 2012, p.273).

While Lydia and Stella were both migrants that partook in remittance practices. Adopting Carling's (2014) remittance scripts, Lydia's remittance practices took form as an act of compensation towards her mother for providing care for her children. According to Landolt & Da (2005), transnational families depend on the care work provided by non-migrant family members in the country of origin. Additionally, Lydia's remittance practice adopted the help script. The help script involves recipients of remittances having worthy needs that sender is able to alleviate (Carling, 2014). The help script often involves moral imperatives and social obligation (Carling, 2014). Lydia has made meaning of remittance through understanding remittance as her obligation as a mother and daughter to provide for her family, in addition to perceiving remittance in a positive light that gives her a sense of pride as she can provide for her family and a sense of accomplishment for the long working hours that go into paid labour as a garment factory worker.

On the contrary, Stella made meaning of her role in remittance practices very differently. Her remittance practices involved two remittance scripts, obligation, and entitlement. The obligation and entitlement remittance script involves a feeling of obligation by the sender and a sense of entitlement by the recipient (Carling, 2014) as in the case of Stella's situation. In

Stella's case, she understands remittance to her step siblings as being forced upon her both from the pressure that is put on her to remit and the fear of her family members looking down on her. Additionally, she perceives remittance in a negative light. As she felt that, it was a burden that she had to bear as the oldest sibling, which could be the devaluation of her paid labour.

Both Lydia and Stella provided for their families in their country of origin. In many parts of the world, adult children are tied to the duty of providing for their elderly parents and family members (Carling, 2014). Stella expressed her role as "I am like a deputy parent because I'm a first born so there a lot of things that I must care of even if I am a parent myself" (Interview, 1). In this case, these migrant 'adult children' had their financial contributions transnationalised into remittances. According to Mbiyozo's (2018) study on women migrants in Southern Africa, evidence indicates that there has been an increase in women that make their own individual decisions to migrate (not migrating due to following a partner) in order to meet their and their family's economic needs as the head of households. Thus, women migrants based their migration destination on that can provide them with better education or work opportunities. Lydia and Stella both migrated from their country of origin to South Africa on their own, motivated by the economic opportunities South Africa presented to them. Mbiyozo (2018) notes that South Africa has various 'pull factors' for migrants such as established social networks of migrants already residing in South Africa and the assumption that accessing employment would be easier for them than in their countries of origin. Moreover, "the migration pathways and experiences of women are unique to women as they are exposed to multiple risks of exploitation and are more likely to work in less-regulated and less-visible sectors than men are" (Mbiyozo, 2018, p.3). Women migrants are employed in unskilled and undervalued work such as domestic, care and agriculture. In terms of labour rights, many migrant women lack employment rights and "Even when laws do offer protection to women migrants, they are often unaware of these or the legislation is not enforced in isolated environments" (Mbiyozo, 2018, p.12). Lastly, the burden of care for women migrants can increase as household responsibilities increase due to women migrant women often being heads of households (Mbiyozo, 2018).

6.3 How women make meaning of their roles in paid labour

The women in the study made meaning of their roles in paid labour in a variety of ways. Some women made meaning of their roles as garment workers through understanding their employment obligations and the laborious nature of their position which affected how their perceived jobs and how much of their time and dedication they gave towards their job.

Most of the women in the study expressed that their jobs in garment factories as machinists, packers, checkers, receivers, cleaners, and supervisors involved a variety of tasks and were not as simple as people assumed they were. However, most of the women did not particularly indicate that they favoured their job or working conditions, except for two women who overtly expressed dedication, commitment, and passion for their jobs, which ultimately influenced how they perceived their job and working conditions.

Lauren explained that her position as a factory director required hard work, as she was the most skilled person in the factory thus everyone depended on her for a multitude of tasks that were beyond her the requirements of her job title, however, she expressed that she enjoyed her job:

> So, no matter what style or type of a job that can come in, I have to do it because I'm more experienced and I have to help everyone else. But now it kills, whereby I need to sit and show them the cutter to do whatever. So, my job, it takes more time, sometimes I can't even take lunch because I'm trying to push some of the things. Overall, I like it because I'm used to it (Interview 10).

Furthermore, Lauren stated that she would voluntarily work more hours than she was required by coming into work earlier and leaving later "By law, it's supposed to be 8 hours, which is half-past 7 to half past 4 and then Friday we start at half past 7 to two. But on my side, I will be here from after 6 and starting to work till half-past 4 or 5 Monday- Friday" (Interview 10). In addition, Lauren stated that she would take work home with her to complete and bring back the next day as a form giving herself homework "when I can't get the patterns right, I give myself homework to figure out how to do the patterns so when I come in the next day, I know what to do and it's very stressful" (Interview 10). While Lauren did express that her job was

stressful, she did not perceive the stress in a negative sense, instead, she perceived the stress she experienced as a part of her job she had to endure, given the position she was in

> Yes, I do feel stressed, but I only feel stressed when we don't deliver on time. but also, in the position that I am in I have to be stressed because it's a stressful position no matter what I have to deal with the stress in my own way there's no avoiding the stress (Interview 10).

Similarly, Stella expressed the same type of dedication towards her job. She expressed that she spent most of her time at work. She stated that the times she spent at work outside of her regular working hours were voluntary as she did not mind working overtime as she preferred leaving work knowing that she had completed all the work she needed to for the day, even if it meant that she had to leave work a lot later than everyone else in the factory "Basically I live at work and sleep at home, if you get what I'm saying, I only leave at 5 or later depending on what I'm doing." (Interview 1). Furthermore, Stella stated, she enjoyed her job as it gave her an outlet to interact with people, it involved her going shopping. It allowed her to be creative while she worked in the factory and trained to be a machinist. When asked if she found her job stressful, Stella stated that there were stressful moments that she faced but overall, she did not experience her work life to be stressful "I am stressed when the production is delayed or when the couriers don't come on time because then I have to deal with the clients, but as I said, I like my job and every job comes with stress in one way or another" (Interview 1).

According to Steger & Dik (2009), deriving meaning from life is essential for well-being. An individual's job or their career domain is one domain in which people can find a sense of meaningfulness through meaningful and purposeful experiences (Steger & Dik, 2009). Work stress is often linked to psychological distress such as depression and burnout (Allan *et al*, 2015). However, the ability to make meaning and sense of work stress might prevent the negative meaning on life-meaning and well-being as positive coping strategies serve as a buffer (Allan *et al*, 2015). People who view their work as meaningful tend to show higher levels of work motivation, job performance and career commitment. Both Lauren and Stella made meaning of their roles in paid labour by understating that their positions were jobs that were inevitably stressful. This influenced how they perceived their jobs. Lauren made meaning of her role as a production director in the garment factory as a role of importance to the production process hence she was committed, dedicated, and passionate about her job, which led her to experience stress and overtime work as part of the job. Similarly, Stella made sense of her role

as a general garment worker and trainee machinist as an enjoyable role, and hence she too was committed, dedicated, and passionate about her job, which led her to experience stress and working overtime as part of the job. According to Allan *et al* (2015), people with positive meaning attached to their work handle work stress better as they translate work stress into positive personal meanings and understandings.

6.4 How women make meaning of their roles in unpaid labour

Based on the findings it was found that women in this study took on the majority of the unpaid social reproductive labour as aforementioned. In addition, it was found that women made meaning, understood, and perceived their role in social reproductive labour with a gendered perspective, which often led to women putting the needs of their family above their own needs.

It was found that the women with partners and the women without both took on a similar amount of unpaid social reproductive labour, the only difference being that the women with partners had occasional assistance from their partners with cleaning and childcare as aforementioned. When asked why women with partners took on the majority of the social reproductive labour in the home, Sarah expressed that when her partner arrived home from work, he was exhausted, and thus partaking in any social reproductive labour would be excessive tasks for her partner to carry out "When he is from work, he is tired, so it is too much for him" (Interview 5). Moreover, Sarah stated that she understood unpaid social reproductive labour to be her responsibility as a woman "yes, it is my job as a woman to do all these things of cooking, cleaning, doing the washing and taking care of the children…" (Interview 5). Likewise, Rose similarly stated that she took on the majority of the social reproductive labour in the home because her partner also worked "It's me but sometimes my partner helps me but my partner he is also working" (Interview 8). However, unlike Sarah, Rose did not overtly state that she felt as though social reproductive labour was to be done by women (Interview 10).

Both Sarah and Rose had justified their roles in social reproductive labour in their homes by asserting that their partners had also participated in paid labour through full-time jobs and by implying that their partners were tired when they returned home from a day's work.

Similarly, the women without partners were also found to have prioritised others over themselves. Lauren expressed that she took on the majority of the social reproductive labour because her 23-year-old son was ‘too lazy' to do anything. The women without partners were found to have prioritised others over themselves through how the women in the study narrated their daily experiences as in all the cases the women had either made no mention of their self-care or they would mention their self-care very briefly at the very end of the day once they had cooked, cleaned and attended to the needs of their children or other family members, “When I get home I cook and tidy up, I make sure I sit with the kids and the homework then I bath and I sleep at 11” (Interview 4). Besides taking a bath as the only time spent on herself, Patience made no mention of leisurely time or time spent on self-care.

Based on the accounts from the women, they usually only received an average of an hour to spend a leisurely time for themselves and received on average 6-7 hours of rest every night. Majority of the women in the study reported feeling tired when asked how they felt when they arrived home “Yoh… I feel so drained and tired, I just want to sleep but that’s not possible because when I get home I have to tidy up here and there, get the little one to bed and all that so it is draining” (Interview 1) and when asked how they felt at the end of the working day “Here I’m working hard so I get too much tired, and then when I get home there’s still other things to do in the house and with the kids which made me even more tired.” (Interview 7).

According to Holt (2010), almost everyone is familiar with the popular image of the ‘perfect family’, where women were considered domestic caregivers, with the sole responsibility of caring for children and the home, while men ‘brought home the bacon’. This concept of ‘the ideal woman', gave women a picture on their gender role that they should mirror in society, thus, many women have constructed their gender identity around this image and may still do so to an extent today (Holt, 2010). Holt (2010), notes that nearly all societies have some form of structuring based on gender roles and that society itself plays a role in the immersion of gender roles and identities by women. Overall, women are expected to simultaneously fulfil multiple roles as discussed in the literature review (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015; 2015, Newell, 1993; Xhaho, 2021).

Despite women taking on the majority of the social reproductive labour after a full day of labour at the garment factories, none of the women in this study complained about doing chores in the home nor did the women with partners mention that they would want their partners to do

more. This understanding of their role in unpaid labour shows that the women understand their roles as caregivers.

7 . Conclusion

This research sought to determine how women employed in garment factories experience the nexus of paid and unpaid labour in their daily lives. The research made findings in regard to the structure of the garment industry, their working conditions and gender relations in contemporary Johannesburg, the daily experience of women garment workers with the nexus of paid and unpaid labour on the factory floor and in their homes and the impact on this on their emotional and physical well-being and lastly, how women make meaning and understand their experiences of multiple roles of providers, migrants, garment workers and caregivers, which will be detailed below.

The fourth chapter focused on the contemporary garment factories in Johannesburg. The findings show that despite there being more FPMs in this study, Johannesburg is still characterised by many smaller informal CMTs. The garment factories in this study were found to be primarily linked to domestic value chains with a few productions linked to neighbouring African countries. Regarding the working conditions at garment factories in this study, most of the garment workers were required to work overtime either on weekends or in addition to their 8-hour workday. None of the garment workers in this study belonged to a labour union nor received any employee benefits. Only garment workers employed at larger factories had job security with full-time employment, whereas workers employed at smaller informal factories lacked job security and worked on part-time contracts. Regarding health and safety conditions, it was found that most workers faced pressurised working conditions for their supervisors in order to meet production targets characterised by workplace misconduct such as yelling. Additionally, garment workers lacked the use of any personal protective clothing and equipment which put them at risk for cuts, bloodborne diseases and skin contact with hazardous chemicals. The lack of ventilation also raised health and safety concerns as workers were at risk of illness and life-threatening incidents such as fires. In terms of the labour that characterises garment work in Johannesburg, it was found that most garment factory workers in this study were South African nationals with the exception of four participants that were migrants from neighbouring African countries. Moreover, despite the gendered discourses of labour that infer gender-biased beliefs of labour for men and women, it was found that women's labour was not as prevalent in Johannesburg garment factories as in other garment factories worldwide. As the garment industry in Johannesburg was found to be characterised by more men working as machinists. While women garment workers were found to be working as machinists, they were more commonly found to be working as receivers, checkers, and packers. Furthermore, it was determined that gender bias was not part of the hiring process, but there

were gender preferences in the workplace environment amongst the workers, as garment workers prefer working with men rather than women. Women were associated with creating negative working environments through gossiping and the formation of workplace cliques.

The fifth chapter focused on the experiences of garment workers with multiple forms of labour. The findings indicated that all the women experienced a double burden of labour daily as women took on the majority of the unpaid social reproductive labour. Their days consisted of unpaid and paid labour. It was determined that the women's experiences of both forms of paid and unpaid labour were not divided into separate spheres but were rather overlapping and interconnected. As unpaid social reproductive responsibilities often interrupted paid labour and paid labour overflowed into the home and time dedicated for social reproduction. This was found to be in the form of working overtime, working on weekends, taking work home, having to attend to childcare responsibilities during working hours, and not receiving adequate rest. Most women in the study reported that they experienced the interplay and overlap between paid and unpaid labour in these forms. In addition, it was found that women that paid labour took up most of their time, leaving them with little time to spend with their families or on social reproductive labour during the week as captured by this quote "Basically, I live at work and sleep at home" (Interview 1). Furthermore, labour was the main activity that consumed the women's time and labour served as a central aspect that determined how the women structured their lives. As majority of the women in this study partook in little to no leisurely activities. In addition, it was found that the women in this study relied on unpaid social reproductive labour, primarily services of cleaning and childcare from other women and female children. This indicated that the socialisation of gender roles and a gendered division of labour begins at an early age. In addition, this chapter focused on the well-being of garment workers. The daily experiences of the double burden of labour contributed to feelings of fatigue, feelings of stress, and receiving adequate rest and time spent on leisurely activities. Workplace mistreatment puts garment workers at risk for low job satisfaction, quality of work and job performance, which threatens workers' well-being and emotional state. The lack of time spent on leisure puts women at risk for psychological complications such as depression and anxiety. Overall, the daily stressors that from the experiences of the double burden of labour negatively impacted the well-being of women employed in the garment industry.

The last chapter on how women garment workers made meaning of their roles, it was determined that women took on multiple roles in their lives such as mothers, partners, sisters,

workers, providers, and migrants. It was found that the majority of the garment workers in this study were from single-headed households, all of whom not only financially supported their children and their nuclear families but additionally, these women financially provided support to their extended family members, in most cases as the sole breadwinner. Women made meaning of their roles as providers through understanding that it was their obligation and responsibility to ensure their family members were taken care of. The four migrant garment workers in this study had to understand their experiences with migration, livelihoods, and remittance practices. It was determined that all the migrants mainly left their country of origin to secure better opportunities and livelihood strategies in Johannesburg with the use of former skills and experience gained in their countries of origin due to their inability to have accessed nor establish secure livelihood strategies in their country of origin. Remittance practices for the migrant women in this study were found to be a key practice attached to accessing livelihood strategies in Johannesburg for family members that remained in the country of origin. Remittances took the form of monetary remittances or gift remittances. However, the meanings attached to remittance practices were not homogenous as they varied from being understood as compensation out of care or as an imposed obligation. This chapter also looked at how garment workers made meaning of their roles in paid and unpaid labour. Regarding paid labour it was established that some of the garment workers believed that their jobs were skilled jobs contrary to popular opinion that classes garment labour as unskilled labour and held their jobs in high regard. Thus, some of the garment workers expressed dedication, commitment, and passion for their jobs which ultimately led them to voluntarily work more hours and accept stress that accompanied their jobs. In terms of how women made meaning of their roles in unpaid labour, it was established that both women with and without partners took on the majority of the unpaid social reproductive labour, yet the women understood their roles in social reproductive labour as caring for their loved ones.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that paid labour and unpaid social reproductive labour are not neatly divided into separate spheres. Instead, they are interconnected and overlapping. Thus, women's experiences of paid and unpaid labour are experienced within a gendered nexus. Moreover, this study contributes to the bodies of work that highlights the significance of social reproductive labour done by women in maintaining society and the significance of the role of women in society. This study also resists notions that dismiss women's labour as anything less.

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